Time has a kabbalah of its own,
when things loom
and when they happen,
how we try to tell ourselves
what is to come
or even urgently
what time is this,
what is this now,
the owl-head M of Monday
left over from Egypt,
lagged tooth f Wednesday’s
W, the bite of midweek,
childish warnings,
trying, guessing to know
what time wants of us,
o language is a desperate risk, the
secret formula solve now,
now may or may not come again.

1 October 2022
Classrooms on the moon
where young poets learn
meaningful dreaming

and semiotic touch—

which

parts of their own body
they should listen to
most keenly,

and which
to keep at a respectful
distance, mere ancestry
snoring way inside.
In those pale lunar chambers they learn that urgent skill:
to speak without assertion, 
hum and sing and watch the sky 
and let the reader drive.

1 October 2022
Of course I’m sentimental. If I were any more so I would turn from mauve to blue and fade like the roses of Sharon on our lawn, As it is, I talk all winter long.
O headache is the noble pain
we let ourselves discuss
almost proudly among friends
whereas the barking shin,
the corn-nipped toes
we leave unspoken,
they grind away at us
steadily, so quietly—
we build our noble
edifices of thought
to hide their nibbling in.

1.X.22

GREEN MAN
They were faking folklore
they wanted me too
to come big and strong and all
smeared green to seize
a cute girl from administration
and carry her off
just like folk legends,
weird creatures from the woods,

just what most men want to do
anyhow, green or purple
doesn’t matter, out of the trees
and seize! Carry, press her
to chest and face and feel her
squirming with feigned fear
and real delight, she likes it too.

I loved the image,
I hated the idea.
What kind of monster
did they think I am?
I rejected their request,
did not attend, did not hear
the squealing autumn noise
sloshing garden and woods,
their innocent playful crudity
wrapped in fairy tales.
I have my conscience,
I have my pride. But I still
can feel the feel of her
clutched so lovingly tight
in my arms that never held her.

2 October 2022
A POEM I DIDN’T WANT

to write but the words
kept talking till
I got upn to write them down.
Then the fun begins.
Began. I feel so middle-class,
the only thing that saves me
from utter bourgeoisie is that
I hate to travel. I like it here.
I am a peasant. No wonder
so many words come
up for the harvesting!

2 October 2022

= = = = =
The words that want us are like the rock face of the anticline the highway cut through, across the river, he words are everywhere, solid, evident, we drive through them to get anywhere at all. Even to stay here, on this rock. But vowels are vistas—through them we see to the end of this world.

2 October 2022
Hands you can shake off
but words stick
the rest of your life.

2.X.22, lune
THE TREES IN THE TRIANGLE

Their soft green
is meaning me,
slow toss of branch
eases me into rhythm,
trees know how to wait
until the right word comes,
a little breeze from the north,
a saint’s breath prying for us.

2.
These are the things you learn
by doing nothing. *Far niente*
the wise Italians day, Romans
of course, their Empire never really ended,
language leads us still.
So sit with the trees and listen,
remember what comes before.

3.
I sound so moralist
to talk like this,
I just repeat the rules
my mother gives me,
my mother from the sea
and here I am. The land
is restless till with our
endless conversations
we ease it back to sleep.

2 October 2022
So bright suddenly the sky like a memory leaping to mind. What had I forgotten so long, the sheer joy of being here? A bird soars over the tallest tree and I don’t even know its name!

2 October 2022
Little religion of waking up. tiny drops of water, seeds a few, pollen from a flower on the skin. And then a little sound like the clink of glass against a glass in a vast empty hall, a few more drops of water smile on the skin. 

3 October 2022
We do this to each other
this love thing,
a headache shared,
I smile with the muscles of your face.
It is the holiest game on earth.

3 October 2022
O infamous obvious
I’m on your side,
I relish your truth,
to say the obvious out loud
is being the sun in the sky.
Leave the hidden
to the witches—
glory in the story we all know.

3.X.22
= = = = = =

Do not touch me
I am not here
the clothes she wore
said that most plain.

3.X.22, 4x4
The sleep of trees wakes humans up. Time is our food, we share one plate.

3.X.22. 4x4
Telescopes fail to show the truth of why we look so far away.

3.X.22, 4x4
These gnomic four-by-fours are meant to get the truth out of the way.

3.X.22, 4x4
How can a four-sided object have six sides? Ask the room you’re in.

3.X.22 4x4
Then the numbers flowed away. we was left u the Delaware again, sun bleached pebbles in shallows years passed and he no wiser. at least the numbers were gone, and water was still there, some, shallow but still moving, river between states, red dirt roads, all that remembering business sloshed at MY ankles again. Vultures overhead, wild turkeys pecking down from the woods. Other river. other weather, why? Why? It sounds like a cry,
memory is a muscle in pain, 
no solution to the present, 
no cure for the past. 
But numbers at least were gone, 
the water eased along, 
birds paid no attention to me, 
here I am, the lese was signed, 
all the lawyers smiling in heaven.

3 October 2022
So if I lifted the latch
who would come in
and if I hold the door
open long enough
to catch the breeze
through the maple trees
will someone suddenly
just be there a smile of woman
a too serious young man
hand ready to persuade me
to read his ancient book or just sit
down then and there and write the
story of all our lives
yet to come so beautiful to be.
A door is good for future right inside
the keyboard under the fingers pen
in hand eyes closed even someone else's gentle hand strong on someone's brow.

2/3 October 2022, v.v.
Catholic bells
are different from the other kind
that say here we are
come if you’ve a mind to
we have good architecture,
nice music to sing along with.
But Catholic bells insist
come whether you want to or not
come and be blessed
or stay away and be damned.
Our windows are prettier too.

3 October 2022
At a certain moment it had been decided in him that the world was real in just the way he was, if he was, aware and feeling and thinking about everything and wanting and not wanting and forever being there. He wanted to be there forever so took lessons from the stone, not just vast arching synclines or mountains on the horizon but from pebbles on the path, did research among the trees, grasslands of the 40th parallel,
Buzzards Bay and Bosporus but most of all the sea he could see from the cloud he also visited, sleep or waking, one mind for all.

4 October 2022
Wait on the bridge
she said
or was it under?
He kept moving,
under over, never
leaving the arch
that held the road
along which she
would have to come.
Or did she move
by water? Under,
over, back in the shade,
dazed ub full moonlight..
And when she did come
would he know her, know she is the one who named his vigil, especially she meant under the span, snug in the archway, dark? Wait by the bridge was all he was sure of—hold onto that, keep the faith, keep waiting.

4 October 2022
Maybe I’ll give everything up and see what comes back by itself.

4 October 2022 4x4
Who left the gate open so the sun slipped away?
Why is it raining?
If we want to be kings on earth we have to take all the blame for nature, apologize for reality.

4.X.22

PSALM
for J.N.

The Lord is my shepherd
he sang and the stone listened

bite marks on though leek leaf
pilgrim disguised as a jogger

children skillfully play
a game they don’t understand,

and I would be his sheep
her pet tiger the autumn moon

cover your heads dear friends
harvest soon, too soon to plant.
2.
Next year’s alliums already sting my eyes, I need the mead of music, parched with truth, need the holy silence only music brings,

stone on your doorstep, door, threshold, liminal, margin, pages of the book to be, 
*Adonai rohi* it sounded like, his young voice suddenly old. words age us, did I even know I wanted to be a sheep, a ram even mighty with curved horns,
would I eat grass? But what is this tumult around me, a town, nation sick with fun at midnight, who really is the moon?

5 October 2022
The resilience of architecture comforts the pilgrim, no place to lay his head his own head maybe but there are places, houses proliferate, stone walls stand. I rub my eyes, Parthenons and Vaticans on every street. And every boulevard leads to the sky—every pilgrim knows that. The delivery van drives around
and finds its fated house.  
The pilgrim watches  
boxes walk inside,  
the truck move on.  
Why can’t it be a bus  
and him inside?  There is  
some me everywhere  
so why not I?  
Itchy grass, autumn moth.  
another mile.

5 October 2022
The bus goes by.
I wonder why.
Where else is there
to be but now?

5.X.22, 4x4
Wear want like satin,
show compliance with seeming so all know.

Knowing is your gift to them they wait for you to show.

5.X.22

= = = = =
I may be a hound
but don’t call me a dog
i stand in the water
up to the knee,
my knee, my sea,
I borrow a shadow
from a sesl, wave
my sword arm high
but no blade in it,
just fingers pointing
to stars I can’t see,
can’t name if I could,
yes, you know me,
you’ve read about me
your entire life
in that broken mirror
you found in the garage.

5 October 2022
Clamshell

*Venus mercenaria,*

why, why?’

So curved so pale
so smooth inside,
faint purple of sunset
undert the knob
that once held another.

Clamshell, ashtray,
paint pot, inkwell,
dip your language
into shallow shell,
quill makes it wobble
the rim so white
so rough below,
a living being
made this font for thee.

5 October 2022
THE OTHER

To Her

The sounding makes sense,
whatever’s said is on its way to her,
rod to test the deep or wooden board to be loud or
letter by letter spelled itself
on its way there
sun come
obe tree so
many leaves.

6 October 2022
In old days they knitted, now not. Why bother wool to weave either when there are words and no sheep shorn? Weave the meaning of your days and let me wear it in the cold night of being me.

6 October 2022
Wait long enough
even the weather wobbles,
slumps down beside you,
rests its warm cheek
on your bare shoulder.
Everything laughs at us
but waiting is what we do best.
Wait at the gate. Here it comes.
Anticipate. Venerate.

6 October 2022
= = = = =

You are even more complicated than you think I am.
I give you a rose and you wonder where it’s from.
You would know history and I have only me.
And I even forgot to smell the rose on its way.

6 October 2022
Morning menace:
mower
complacent in his
loud little noise box
that grinds on the grass
and leaves it as it way
it seems. They do it
for the sound, the carbon
footprint they delight
to printr on the air,
sky, the baffled trees
who wonder why we
plant lawns but hate grass.
See, the mower makes
my mind stupid
with its chant, makes me
think and say the obvious.
Go home. Leave green alone.

6.X.22
Unter vier Augen
the Germans say,
under four eyes
as tete-a-tete,
head to head
me and you and
nobody else,
knee to knee
we might say,
a table between
our only witness.

6.X.22
Raptacious
as a dream
snatching away
the taste of morning.

an old word
they use it in Kentucky
greedy to grab,
rip off the grey
cloaks of waking.

Words wake us.
dream drags up
back from the what
is this anyhow,
we blunder through images
even when there’s no one there.

7 October 2022
Getting started
moon on river
arch over flowing

where had we been
to see such sights
one breath between
sermon and song

church of the woods
north east south west
we spun the dial

always only one tree
at the center
find the right one
and tell the moon,

bridges are best
for thinking—Come
on home with me
the night explains.

7 October 2022
Race car driver aimed at the sky. Show the video again, the part where the books are bones and the whole city turns into a cemetery.

2. you can see that too, gazing through a broken window lo into an old miner’s shack and there everything is, tu sais?
3. Mila found the bones of his mother, somehow taught how to think, thinking is praying, isn’t it? taming the mind, holding one thought and being held by it, what do you find to start you?

4. Magic has no exceptions, only excuses, words we didn’t grasp in the first place now bite us on the wrist, the fanning of forgetting, come home to the ruins
that stretch out for miles
in the Pompeii of your mind,
the world fresh and new outside.

7 October 2022
Guilty. I am a chain-breather, even on trains and planes, funerals and churches, crowded theaters, even in bed my furtive breaths inhale each one delicious, each takes in the reality of circumstance, the where and when of all the air around me, each air special, different, no need for cinnamon I tesse my wife, but sometimes sometimes I do need to add the sugar of her smile. 7.x.22

HMS BOTANY
sailed through the woods,
the squint-eyed captain measuring leaves,
drawing outlines of them in a dusty book—
someday I’ll get them all
he breathes, and the first mate helps the helmsman steer between the trees,
name me! name me!
each one cries, so much work a life to sail a mile of woods.

7.X.22

== == == ==
I know they say shabbát in Hebrew but in Brooklyn we heard shábbess, as if a girl waiting for us at sunset beautiful and full of kindness, we had to be at our best for her, the lady who never abandons us.

7 October 2022

INVITATION TO ATLANTIS
come with me to that place whose name lives
so deeply in all water

we will not find it deep below
we will find it high above the sea in what we call the sky
where every cloud every breath is moisture is mother

an inhabitant of that strange country that vanished
before we could even begin
vanished and left us to do the work of being, being the others
so maybe just maybe we are

Atlantis already the world that slipped below the clouds the world of secrets clear as the sky.

6/7.x.22, v.v.
Roll up these mountains
Slip me into your pocket
Carry me along the river bank
to where churches stand,
face each other Island to mainland,
cross to cross
and each has its own idea
where heaven is and what
kind of street goes there
All I know is that
heaven is right here
so stop anywhere you like
take me out and set me down.

Blue sky
shy cloud in it
not so bad
October
we come here
for the stone
fact, children
of the glacier we
search for father,
the real one,
the rock.
You know this,
you go there
for the jubilee,
the celebration
every day
that is stone,
stone island, stone
peninsula outstretched
into the mothering sea.
You go there to determine
the facts are as you supposed
as a child among the dogs of men
haltingly grabbing at you
and you knew, even then,
you were stronger than they,
you were petros, the rock
on which the church is
yet to be built.
And what a church it will be!
No spirest but desire,
no pontiff but the other,
for them and us all
you sim your mind,
shape the shimmer of thought
into a word we all can see,
a true word soft as marble—you’re right it really does
look just like human skin.

8 October 2022

= = = = = =

A rumor on the Rialto,
a bird is coming, hawk-hungry
but no squeal alive
to warn us, a silent bird
wings made of memory
spread out to shield us
from motherly sunshine,
and there we’ll be
glum in the shade,
quiet as music
with no one to talk to,
not even ourselves.
They think it’s winter
but I know it’s longer than that,
I have seen its feathers fall
now and then across the path,
in shadow, no sun glare,
easier to pick out
the threads in the fabric,
a bird that we thought!
will scare us to sleep.

8 October 2022

The caliber of October
aimed at us,
do we humble
us before winter?
Us is a strage country,
can’t make up our minds.

9.X.22
NUMINA

Sometimes saying their names is communication enough. Friends. The family with no shared DNA. Names link us, recite them sometimes at waking, to know them, to know they are there.

2.
Write down all their names. Mix the letters all together. Play Scrabble with them, use all the letters, unscramble the secret messages, call it
kabbalah of friendship, what you have really learned from knowing them. Love in this science is just, but just a song along the way.

3. So I wrote down the names of friends I had to write to today, little notes mostly, nothing scary. I wrote what I had to write, it felt so strange, as if it all were done already on this busy day, as if they knew already all
that I was about to say, knew all, but I knew they needed the words too.
sing story,

geology of breccia,
Arthurian romance, a stone
to stumble on
yet again.

Again the dream
of houses where,
the blond sunlight invading,
woodshed and Alaska,
hold it steady, the pan too full.

Time is what must get answered
but never soon, the light
above the door comes on,
a voice gentle as the fingertip
tap on the window glass says
I was born here can I come in?

absurd pilgrim, to think
and to think you can ever leave
a place you have been,

places stick, you are their sum
stumbling through the shattered
fragments of the new.

The stone rested there.
Pick up your lute or flute
or telescope and try
to make a song of it,
an image we can see—
that would be brave, bold
as an engine,
sweet as the stones
of ancient Athens
scattered in your backyard.

10 October 2022
They lay down side by side on the gentle slope of the hillside, grass under, and looked out over the grasslands stretching out to the horizon.

“Where are we in this green earth?”

“Nebraska,” L answered.

“I know that,” said M, “I mean where are we in this
world, what is our place, how do we fit in??”

“Nebraska is still my answer—we have to be someplace in particular, and from the place we can figure out why we’re here.”

10.X.22 to S.W.
It came in the night
like a pebble in the shoe
a dream with no people in it
and no place at all

just the single feeling
of being outside indoors—
how could anyone go on sleeping?

10 October 2022

WALKING THE LOG
midnight spindrift
puzzle as could be
sheer odentity
villain in every piece
my friend wrote an opera
the beech trees of the hill
can hear it better than
always [?] I, the villain,
*basso malefico*, growls
cloaked in Irish sunshine--
open the door and let it in.

10-11.x.22

= = = = = =
Tell me about the highest road in those mountains across the river and I will and I will tell you about a shail shell I found once on a plate in Chinatown, no. tht ws a cockleshell the snail was in the yard before the wat, remember the sky above the steeple, the small tree I didn’t know you said it was a hawthorn and now is now? Snail trail leads here, always. Drive up Overlook, Round Top? Be a car with me, a warm
more vehicle than utility, more utility than sport but still, wheels work, growl up the ross, all I want to do is breathe the sky, suddenly that sounds scary, angels? what price that breath? bark pf the locust tree too, rivers flowing straight up, in France this is the day of Mars here it’s Two’s day, old you’n me, ride me up there, my shell Spun around a mere identity you can change any time you like just by saying so, here we go tell what used to live inside me
before it talked itself out away, please help me to find the tree.

11 October 2022
Nobody on my mind.  
Hmm.  Nobody  
in my ballroom, nobody  
waiting on the daybed.  
Who are these absence?  
If all morning were like this  
where would civilization be?  
Isn’t it really just other people?  
What am I doing here alone,  
caveman babbling sounds  
that float away like feathers  
in the autumn air, feathers  
but no birds.  We exist  
only for the other, where
on earth are they now?
I am alone with the trees,
no names in in my head,
so I will be of use to the trees.

11 October 2022
BONJOUR, ROBERT,

you have milked this melancholy long enough. Never have you seen a stone weeping. Laughing, yes, rolling down hill splashed all over in the stream. But no gloom. A stone is here for the season, for a reason, rest on the thought of it now as a traveler might settle for a minute on the stone itself left by the glacier song his road.

11 October 2022

= = = = = =
Something strange about the way
a white truck runs along
through dense trees
an empty morning road
it’s a miracle story f
rom sacred history,
Bible or Babylon,
a sudden shine makes the moment
real.

11 October 2022
whenever the other—like an amphora carved out of purple marble, small, for oil, or rest scattered pearls in, time is like that, time is the kiss of the other given freely, answer it we must, you make me me.

2.
It comes of having things. A little stone pot on the sill from Greece by friend
whose loss is still,
still there, palpable,
colorful, the way death’s pigments linger
in the fresh new day.

3.
So I suppose history began when we first made things.
Before that, there was nothing to force us to remember,
maybe trees turning color, but then the green comes back snow melts and here I am.

4.
Thingless thinking?
Goethe begging for more light?
Close the senses, be a stone
and do nothing but remember?
Dangerous mind of morning.

12 October 2022
History is a habit
history is a whore
history belongs to any
bloke who writes a book.

12.X.22
The yellow lingers longer in this season, sunlight lathered leaves even on cloudy days. O holy Torah of the visible, how much you teach us even when we close our eyes.

12 October 2022
THE NAMES PRONOUNCE US
into the room. Our names?
Time will tell. English names
come from the parent—Johnson—
or where they lived—Oakes—
or how they earned a living
—Fisher—or how ancestor
looked—Brown. Men quarrel
all life long with their names.
But still when the herald calls
they come into the room, sure
of nothing but the ground below
which holds them now and would
keep mothering them if they fall.

12 October 2022

================================
Remember on the desert how a man on the road seemed as weird as a wolf but there were no wolves,

and if he stopped and started to talk his words would have the authority of strangeness, the legitimacy of almost no meaning at all, except the one you had to find in them,

a burden like the desert sun, cacrus leaning on a hot breeze. You called him Moses
and wrote it all down,
and drove him into town.

13 October 2022
A machine is lecturing nearby, the grass might be its audience but it is raining and I wonder. I see it crawling by the fence- who would have a pet like that?

13.X.22
When a circle opens its eye
the world falls in.
Can’t help it, that’s the way
light goes, always eager
for some frame or vessel,
grail or amphora or pool.
Light wades in. The circle
suddenly bright, its eye
shines back and thanks the light,
gladsome sensual reciprocals.
Shapely lamp posts of Brooklyn childhood shaped the manner—no light stands alone. Somehow one must be beautiful to be seen and make others see. Cities do the real teaching—school is to get away from home.

13 October 2022
CHANSON

If I waited any longer
it would be now
and then where would you be?
Out there in Elsewhere
among the arrogant taxis,
lone pedestrian or hurrying
among with goofy friends.
And here I bide, slowly
relaxing the strings of my lute.

13.X.22
SOCIETY

List all the things that scare you then expect they will be brought before one by one or all at once, the gorilla and the rattlesnake, raving rightist with a gun, all the infectious diseases of Asia, all ready to pounce, slither, bite, insinuate, fire, choke. That’s what other people are for.

13.X.22

= = = = = = = =
Shadows left on the wall. Nineveh. White wet tile of swimming pool and all of you in it It isn’t that walls confine us—they belong to us, sleepy guard dogs Ake care of us, , mutt or glossy pedigree, they need so little chow, just our shadows. Nurture. Remember. Stand.

14 October 2022

= = = = = =
Cat on windowsill
looking out through glass
street-level apartment
newish building but where?
Upper East Side? Berlin?
It didn’t speak, I don’t know
its language, but its eyes
still follow me, the way any
at sees right through you
as we say in English, never
guessing what they discern
on the other side of us.
Pale brick of the wall, clean
window, a potted plant
not far behind the cat, table,
dark interior, think of him
still, I guess he’s my cat.

14 October 2022
The Chairman of the Bored turns on the telly, watches things hurtle against each other for the sake of a thing like a giant almond nut they call a ball. Switch. A high-pitched baritone screams the news in French. Click. Water shortage in.. he changes channels before he can learn where, thirsty already, Now here’s something: Scottish detectie on the trail of h he’s seen this one already.
Switch off. The big blabk screen is dark, more interesting than what it had once displayed. It’s like a mirror, it shows a dim vista of the room he’s in, he sees himself in his chair, things getting interesting at last.

14.X.22
Woman in fox fur
man in black jersey.
Then the rest of the night
mist in the trees at morning.
How many daisies fit on one lawn
how many hazelnuts did you
slip into my palm?
Precision leaves a lot unclear,
the visitors have gone,
why are we never alone?
At times like this
I really miss the sea.

15 October 2022
Casuist of circumstance
I argue from the bottom,
never mind the flowery
steepletop of things–
bite the root. Permit
friendship. View skill
with caution—who knows
where a discus lands,
tricky as sunbeams
the kids in your class
way back then. Decide.
Make your ind up beforehand
what kind of day it will be.
Arguing with angels is allowed,
they listen but are hard to sway.
Shoes on! Pilgrimage resumes!

15 October 2022
Later the mist lifted a little.
The sky rubbed its eyes
so trees had leaves again,
not just shapes. Accept omen.
Make love to the details.

15.X.22
There is a reason for the color of our eyes—sea, sky, earth, the night, it tells us what we should see—or is it only what we have already so many times seen?

15.X.22
When I was a child we heard whippoorwills up here, all gone, now wild turkeys come and the pheasants are gone. No more porcupines but bears lumber gracefully in backyards at midnight. Who know what happens in the river, sturgeons, seals by Saugerties? And am I the same as I have been?

15.X.22
It’s all my fault, my latest hit, the one assertion you’ll all believe It’s all my fault I cry and they applaud, confession is good for the soul they say, soft as white bread after the rind of the real.

15 October 2022

= = = = =
I was in a leather jacket
pair of pliers in the pocket,
face mask but no cigarettes
and a whole city full of choosing.
Leather ice skates, wallpaper
of pale 18th Century ladies
lying about in a landscape.
And everyone was elderly,
the walls were blue and close,
every shop was full of things,
interesting things, good
to look at and be near to
but no urge to buy. Things
are better where they are,
don’t take them home, they
are landscape of the other
leave things where you see them, they make no sense in my own living room. And J don’t smoke but needed to learn how to buy cigarettes these days, Indian reservations? None on West 59th, at least the street sign maintained it was.

15 October 2022

SPOUSAL

Breathe me with your breath, let me sleep in the rhythm
of your breathing beside me, we live each other in the dark.

16 October 2022
GUNSHOTS AT DAWN
far enough away
for me to think our bodies
make these sounds.
Then closer, closer
till even I understand
that what I hear
is murder in the woods,
on the river. Not much
consolation ro rwcognize
that birds are beig slaughtered,
not other people. Hunters
must be the strangest creatures,
blasting lives out of the sky.

16.X.22
Early fell in love with what he would become, spent his youth shaping his old age. Even in high school you could tell in the locker room he yearned to settle a grandchild on each knee and before he even shaved dreamt a beard down his chest. Scholarship came easy to him, he was after all the sum of all that had been before, just look
in the mirror and see Rome rise, Polynesians raft the sea, Moses holding up the sacred tablets on which the revelation rode: the alphabet itself, is all we need. Some kids are born with a Ph.D.

16 October 2022
LINDEN

The linden tree has heart-shaped leaves we say
but the shape we have in mind
is nothing like the heart inside.

Now I start wondering if we draw those pretty little symmetrical big-bosomed pointy red hearts on old-fashioned Valentines and high-tech emojis because they’re the shape of linden leaves

and who knows which came first,
maybe linden was the tree that taught us love, maybe it means more than a muscle does.

16.X.22
BOOK REVIEW

It is a great epic for the Do-It-Yourself era, a long poem the subject matter of which is language, its heroes are pronouns and its story is whatever comes to mind as you read or hear it. Yes, you can hear it too! Line by line into the small eternity of your own forgetfulness.

16.X.22
Deign to do.
Arose. Boards creaked
feet beneath. Grey breath hardly yet.
Sneak up on the day is best.
Deign to perceive, rub the sky gently,
it too knows how to sleep.
Stall by window
deign to see.

17 October 2022
Evidence, inference,
polar bear made of snow,
animal translated from weather,
too many things to do today
to do any of them,
tell children that, all it takes
is watching snow melt,
keep in mind images of the bear,
wait for the bus to come.
Dare to do less–the artist
works all night so you can stand
wide-eyed and gape-mouthed
at what she has done, you
don’t know her, never saw
anything but the bear, the bright sunlight on its unwinking eyes, the sun that scares all of us away.

17 October 2022
It doesn’t feel like an opera today
it feels like a dignified old-fashioned
British detective story, the only
evidence the color of fallen leaves.

17 October 2022
STUDY THE CEILING,

the ceiling has much to say. It has herd and smelled so many things, witnessed scenes out of {roust or worse, kept the wrath of heaven from falling on the slugabeds below. Study on ad study slow, lie there and let your research be excuse enough for lingering two woolen and one cotton layer deep beneath fascinating blank

17 October 2022

== == == == ==
Is it a truck a block away or your own fridge behind you? Everything makes music— you decide. I mean you do, all of you do, even though so few hear between the lines.

18 October 2022
Somebody’s birthday
and I forget. The trees
who tell me so much
keep their own calendars
so I suppose they don’t
know whose. But who knows?

18 October 2022
The Feast of St. Brevity, gloriously impatient, pAtron of haiku and lunes.

18.X.22
Suppose Eden was a prison and the apple a key to ge tout. How would we think of serpents?

Is there anything in the world that isn’t really upside down?

We are deep-sea creatures living at the rich bottom of the ocean of sky.
In future society, diseases will be classified by the price of treating them. Children will boast of the cost of their cure.

18.X.22
Listen to the light
she said
and rode away

miles past the mountains
there is a city
where they chew on air

where they build on water
and walk on sunbeams
even late at night

mostly what they do there
though is waiting,
the teacher comes now and then
smelling if cinnamon
robbed in cinnabar
wise, wise, wiser
even than words.

19.X.22
Soak a face cloth with warm water, wring it out a little. Now rub it firmly slowly on the stone nearest your door. Then carefully wring out the last new drops into a glass, you’ll want an ounce or two, Then, only then, set it out in the sun, then that very might in moonlight or darkness if no moon.
Next day take a scant teaspoon of it. This will cure you of time.

19 October 2022
As writers we try in language to recover and reclaim the awarenesses we had as children, that children have, before language give them tools to communicate, while limiting what they can find words to communicate. The give-and-take of language keeps us busy, but I suspect that most writers wisely or foolishly
feel wistful for that time before
words, when still they could do is feel,
and hear, and touch, and know.

19.X.22
Riding a horse
that isn’t there,
kayaking in the clouds–
a body has a mind in it can do
these almost wicked things.

Now I’ll sit down and
run my daily mile.

19.X.22
LOOKING AT THE MAYBE

yes it is dawn after all
the dark receding
into the trees
weaves me with almost
a world to see,
little world, bushes,
birdbath, fence—
and fence means town
and town means true,
city, all of us and you.
The little song again
seeps from the sky.

20 October 2022

= = = = =
Trumpet blare on Crescent Street
wa-wa of slide trombones
angled off the mouthpiece so
they wouldn’t hit the guy ahead
autumn of Italian band
parading down to Linden,
festival at St. Fortunata’s,
who was She, the blaring
made us all holy, we too,
saints of just standing there.

20 October 2022

= = = = = =
All the things I’ve said before hyssop and juniper and *je t’aime*
clogged vestibule of the ear choked with would-be music and I’m sorry but not very, the beast goes on, the field slips into trees and no end, the beast runs parallel to mind, where else s there to go once the sun has risen? All the harbingers, all the glorious aftermaths! Sovereign sleep drops the reins the busybody democrats of day take over, each deed a prayer, each footstep a pilgrimage.
You start by accepting your name.

20 October 2022
Moss covers the rock up to the crack. There sea shows through dark we call green and flecked with sun, what little works in. We see this thing. We treasure it, precious object discovered in dream. Only there. Ir is as if there were no other sea.

20 October 2022
PERILS OF PUBLIC READING
They put it in my hand when I came in,
I was still holding it when it was time to begin so thumb nail easy
cracked the grainy skin,
I fingered out one segment, mouthed it to be polite, said mmm
and sucked the not so Very sweet thin juices,
chewed the tough fiber, my tongue said tangerine. He’s eating an orange!
I heard someone say
and I am polite so
I said thanks for the fruit.

2.
Fruit! There
was the problem,
there was the sin.
I was there
to be poet
but right away
I generalized.
Fruit. It could
mean kiwi or banana.
I chewed some more
to cover up my fault,
resolved to rectify it
before I said a single word brought to read, pages in my other hand.
Thank you for the tangerine I cried and another voice said He means a mandarin.
I shu up and started to speak.

21 October 2022

= = = = = =

The brpken pavement the boy sheltering from rain
his head bent to shield
the book he studied,
Hebrew fluttering pages,
Or Aramaic, was it kabbalah,
I closed my eyes, he was gone,
sunset, no rain, the road
cracked still at my feet.
How far to go. How far
is it really from one to two,
can we get there in an hour,
can I get there in one life?
I knew at least I was that boy
once, the print was Greek,
doxa, mere opinion, falsehood?
Or thinking on its way to reason,
a guess, a book lost long ago.
If again wakes, looks at mirror asks am I
two of me
or is seeing
dreaming still?

22.X.22
Pretty dock *Dakar*
blue fish-
erman’s yawl,
o a jetty is a gentle
place, a land
safe for seeing sea.

One stands and admires
lines of the vessel,
lines of the coast,
O I would be a harbor
and all the names
would come to me,

moor in my emptiness.

22.X.22
The feeling comes
with no words to say it,
hardly even a picture,
maybe huge bright window
of a classroom prison
a child praying to it,
through it, to be out.
But that’s too cute, too sad.
There is some hope
happening too, ghost
planning a new life,
mourners betting drunk
after a funeral, burial,
the loud saloons by Calvary.
No. That goes down the wrong street. Be alone and be out there. Treetop—that’s more like it. Don’t climb it. Just be it.

22 October 2022
Sometimes you know what people mean even if their words don’t. Gradually the child learns to spell silence.

22.X.22
O busy traveler
isn’t it time
for you to sit down
and tell what you have seen,
what all the places
made you be,
and who you are now
right now, sitting on a chair,
eyes closed, not even remembering?

22.X.22
Haven’t I told you enough about rabbits already? Well, here’s another one. A rabbit jumped into the creek, climbed onto a log floating by, rode on it downstream all the way to the sea and turned into me. It’s always scary to tell the truth.

22.X.22
Years ago in Lucknow
scrawled on a wall
VOT DILIP KUMAR.
Hard to forget it.
On a stone near my house
carved in VITE WILSON.
Hard to forgive
what they make things say.

22.X.22
Everything is small.
We can say the whole length of the Danube in one word. Ister.
Or the largest thing on earth has such a small name. Sea.
And the one who wakes us every morning without fail.
You have to say a whole lot of words to say less.

22.X.22
Why aren’t you in church
the bird demanded.
— I am, I am, can’t you see
the trees all round me?
— I thought people needed
churches that talked.
— We do, I do, just listen
to those sermoning leaves.

23.X.22
Cranky bathrooms
had to share, moldy brick
a long walk to the taxi stand
how to get home?

Each dream
asks that question in a new way,
perils of nocturnal literature,
ask the nice ladies for a ride,
every entrance leads back
to old darl brick, ragged ivy,

stand by the oven and wonder,
will they let me in their car. It is a long way to California I seem to be from. Books think under my arm, don’t ask me what they say.

23.X.22
ONCE IN ANNAPOLIS

visiting a friend
there for the yachts
I never saw, the sea
was near but somehow
belonged to the Navy
and the wealthy. Ah well,
things do. But there
I saw a tree, no names
please, tall enough
to dwarf his house,
dark like locust, and this
seemed a friend from home.
No, I’m not a good traveler,
yes, I’m always on the way home.

2.
But the tree stays in mind strange emblem of a seaside town, school for sailors and their tailors. we are who we are by the way we dress, open the buttons one by one.

3.
And the tree had none
of course, what am I doing here, drive to Baltimore where at least there are streets, department stores, race tracks all kinds of things I don’t’ need and don’t want but love to see all round me, Why am I talking about me again, this is supposed to be tree.

4.
Once I was lonely once i was free, men all around and no woman for me. You think it’s me
moaning on again but no,  
it was the tree said that.  
And for forty years I’ve wondered 
what is a wife for a tree?

5.  
I asked the preacher  
you cna guess what he said:as man  
cometh forth from woman  
so cometh tree from the earth, 
yea, earth is mother and bride.

6.  
So what has all this to do  
with Annapolis,  
and who was this Anna
the city borrows the name of. Not sure. Ask yourself the next time you’re lonely, is it the place’s fault, are there places where it is not good to be alone.

23 October 2022

= = = = = =

On a day when people do it’s a wonder they say moon. And moon is so many
things to do rise and set
and gleam and glow and all
the mysteries men intuit
from the shadow it shows
and yet shove on thrît shoes
and sprint to work, delve
in the subway and hope
not just for a seat on the way
gto work but to be safe
in that man-made devildark
down below, roaring and
crazies in the crowd. Monday.
Up here a shotgun at dawn,
a bird falls, the tears of things.
Who can I blame? The moon?
Look in the mirror.
DACTYLOGRAPH 1

Questioning when everything responds to you, I obediently practice ancient symbolic directives for gathering health, jewels, knowledge, love. Zones extremely close vibrate beneath normal mornings.

24.X.22
It’s a word, you can have it if you want. Just say it back to me once in a while so I remember what it means.

24.X.22
Rapture
and things like that
walking by the river
wanting to be it
or at least be in it, part
of its enterprise
of coming from something real
and going somewhere else,
you yearn for that,
you’re up to your ankles already
then step back ashore,
singing, yes, song
takes you a long way,
the urgent articulate muscles
of your body learn from
or maye they teach the river
how to move and what it means
to move, maybe your body,
shoulders and hips and arms
swung out before you
is the real instructor
the obedient geology of earth
studies to emulate, one day
maybe it will become.
But all your religions
and all your desires
conspire to persuade you
it’s the other way round.
We learn from rivers,
we listen to stone.
You take two more steps up the bank, the berm, words, rocks, you sit down on a stone wait and watch it all go on without you. But you are with it as it goes. Sitting still right jere will take you everywhere.

24 October 2022
Ladybug on the window
tank on a distant road
we live and die by sizes.
Depth perception
is the music of life.

24.X.22
The river birch is closer,
tall to the waist of the other,
linden? locust? just beyond,
grey light, all I can do is listen.

24.X.22
Lights of a car through trees,
What more do I need?

You.

I used to think
food and books and music
were all I needed
then they all
tturned into you. You.

25 October 2022

SOUTH OF DARJEELING
I stood on the terrace with the Lama looking out at the morning mist on the hillsides, how beautiful it was I thought and said. He shivered responded Outside maybe, inside not so good.

25.X.22
A game where you hit a ball till it rolls into a hole and you pay a kid to fish it out so you can hit it again. Why can’t I understand the simplest things?

25.X.22
I could pretend to be someone else for a while, a staircase in Venice or a swingset in the park. Still, still, beneath the going, the flowing through the air and come back again. Or I could be a racing car idling at the side of an ordinary road, afraid to rev and run, fear I might not get there wherever racers go. Afraid to say any more. Pretending is worse than advertising,
crueler than credit cards.
I can’t even pretend anymore
though the steps of Santa Maria
are very white and very lean

25 October 2022
Don’t look back—the back has work enough of its own to do, reading and understanding what came before, the road you traveled to get to what you think of so fondly as here.

Don’t look back, the back is busy, the gone is hard at work the lost building its stone towers, lotus pools, heretic cathedrals.
Don’t look back, it might unnerve you to see how many ae following you, right now, with stories of their own, all the stories have you in them so don’t look back. Please, for my sake, and I am one of you.

26 October 2022
How many months in a cloud? Over Geneva I counted summer, in Glendale calculated winter from the freeway. I still don’t know.

The sky today hazy but no cloud, at least none you can count unless you stop at One. Weather confuses arithmetic—I learned that as a kid on snowy days in school when all the number fade away. O give me algebra instead
where it’s all inside!
where nothing needs counting
and all the months are just now.

26 October 2022
I’ve been reading Proust, the part where they’re staying in an otherwise empty hotel by the sea. That’s the place for me, soon as his party leaves and all the corridors are quiet and every room asleep. I can be anywhere, and quietly, and the sea always friendly when I get lonely. And loneliness is such a blessed treasury!

26 October 2022

SHOPPING LIST
Hope.
Immanence
Caution
Chopped belief
Sinecure
Choice, 2 kinds
Breath

... 26.X.22
HOMEOPATHY

Try it
don’t talk
it don’t
think it
or think
anything else,
the girl on horseback,
the man on the ladder.
It is medicine.
It works by itself.

26.X.22

== == == == ==
Too close to the waterfall
your socks get wet.
It isn’t always tragedy
but don’t get any closer.

26.X.22

NOTHING GATE
1.
Nothing gate,
a glad apartness.
It sees me back,
am I a stone
or better brick
made by mind
of dirt ad water,
will I? Open
I do dare, at times,
a gap in my anxiety
matches a doorway
and it goe me in,

2.
Uphill the water surges
I stood on the Pali heights
in that famous wind when
all the words I ever breathed
came roaring back at once.

3.
But it doesn’t have to be Hawaii.
Gentlest autumn trees abound
in subtle variations, color, shade,
yet tumultuous are all the leaves
and they remind, remind, remind.

4.
Spin song,
buffo romance,
never take
the lad quite
seriously,
skeptics are
good for the soul.
So I was moved to see
in that Buddhist bedroom
a crucifix on the wall
even if iy was a dream.

5.
See where the gate goes?
We say gait in English too,
how one walks, as if to take
even one step is to go
and go through. All I have to do is tell you this.

27 October 2022
HARMONY

The one with orange leaves at the peak of the Triangle among the mostly still green starting to go. Going is losing blue. What is left is gold. Then that goes too. More in light than we can see, we use it to see by but don’t know how to see it itself. Parameters of human ignorance appall. But we have Buddha nature too.

27 October 2022

= = = = = =
Wait, I haven’t said
the morning psalm yet,
so here goes:

In Shetland the sheep
outnumber people
and why not?
Innocent and soft
but libidinous enough
to welcome many lambs
and they speak
an English of their own
and so do we, we do,
we stand in the morning
on our little island,
every one of us stands form
on an island of our own
and bleats a blessing
out over the sea,
a blessing of every me
on every thee and them
and it and all, we breathe
the morning in
and kiss it out, love, love,
the kind that made the world.

27 October 2022

Old friends don’t
age in our minds
so when we see them
grizzled or toddling
on a walker we think
this world a bitter place,
a loss, a lingering sorrow
we call memory. For hours
after we shun mirrors.

27.X.22

THE TENT

Timidly tenderly
tease open
the tent flaps. 
Absence abounds.

2. 
Darkness is always an interesting answer, no rabbi could be richer with subtle implications.

3. 
Bend. Dare to go in. Maybe yourself be light enough to see who slept here once,
left bread behind,  
a not quite empty jar.

4.  
Moment by moment  
so much is up to me.  
Tell myself these things,  
morning morals. wait,  
wait for the food word.

5.  
I think it was a scientist  
studying the way they do  
the grammar birds or how
mushrooms understand their earth. Not a hunter, at least not the species that kills trying to make some sense of his sad life.

6.
No, this was no hunter, feel the thought, thinking leaves a shimmer, an echo, the way music does, an echo fingertips can feel touching what someone thought.
This business of living in a body or needing a body to live, we’ve got to do better. True, it’s given us great cathedrals and scultjure and paintings, nice memories ro brig with us
if we could somehow travel into the world of pure knowing. Pure knowing, everything known and no knower needed to know it, so we’d live in pure awareness.

2.
We are still here the trees whisper, green or bare– don’t think. your body is the only one. Who knows? What you know
may last forever.

29 October 2022
The colors know us so well
girl in a shiny dress
white bus goes by
I say ‘shiny’ and you see
the color for yourself.
I mean you answer them,
stumbling into mysterious indigo.
Yesterday in the little city
I saw the soft blue sky
suddenly (in my mind’s eye)
condense all its blue
deeper and darker into
fierce blue of Mahakala
silently roaring a vagrant world
back into huntress decency.
Then we drove home safely
through lucid woods
in the already gathering dusk.

29 October 2022
What would I need?  
A cello a little forest  
in Bavaria, a bassoon,  
a baritone to murmur  
some of the odd questions  
that music love to propose,  
why is the moon?  
who is the mother of the rock?  
do you love me whoever I am?  
Then I’d set them all to work,  
the trees too, their rustle  
is my chorus, I just have to find  
the notes for the instruments,  
they like exact instructions,  
nothing more severe than a flute
and I need one of those too. Can you hear it now? I need you to tell me what I’m saying.

29 October 2022
Lindens, maples, 
tall tulip tree and river birch, 
y countrymen, my guides.

2. Travel by window alone. 
Th journey is long, 
comforting even, 
endless like the sky.

3. They are the given, 
the green necessities, 
light and shadow
turn their leaves we read.

4.
Pound’s birthday, he knew a thing or two about trees, and Valery’s who who fled with the birds, this very roof that shields the sky from our curiosity.

5.
Trees do that, exactly define what wedge of sky we see betwixt their branches as last night one
sliver of the prospering moon.

6.
Linden loves us, maple feeds.
Be simple as that I tell the child I can’t stop being.

7.
So it comes back to me, the real one or disguised as Chinese sage or stout Cortez, the desperate hoper who soars or stumbles out of the gate of every poem.
8.
No, it must be tree.
I insist, not me—
I wouldn’t even be of not for someone else.
Go find the else. The tree must know the way.

30 October 2022

Not much mail Sunday morning but in the old days we got none,
I’ll explain all this to you on my rusty banjo, where did all those years go? no matter, just sing along with me: Not much e-mail Sunday morning and what little comes your way you’re better off not reading, oh not much mail on Sunday morning might as well go back to sleep.

30.X.22

== == == == ==

Saw a wolf-spider in the closet walking on a woolen scarf.
Not venomous, they say. But big as a silver dollar and running fast into the dark. Where does it come from, how does it live, solitary among the winter clothes?

30.X.22

I am the tabernacle where the tribe of Me shelters this long life crossing the deserts of time
on our way to promise land. So many of us in my chest, whispering and shouting, wanting and wanting.
Put wheels under cart
put engine in cart
put gas in engine
put wheel on top
make somebody hold wheel.
So much work!
Better stay home, grow, grow
like flower, grow like a tree!

30.X.22
I spot a map on the wall
a country I’ve walked in
but I can’t see the girls,
the cathedrals, the avenue
of walnut trees stretching north,
I can’t hear the market jabber
in that smart tongue, can’t feel
the wind rushing down old hills.
But there it all is two feet wide
and paper thin, a little faded
from the sunm held n earth
by four push-pins, my Germany.

30 October 2022
on a neighbor poet

I miss the music
when I read his talky lines
then I realize he leaves
a gap beyond each line
for me to work the music in,
hard work, we do it together,
we’re dancing! And nobody
eve said that tango is easy.

30.X.22
On this bright Sunday morning all gold and the trees still green I hear the hollow-hooting train down by the river, as if weird midnight leapt up at noon. Halloween’s tomorrow, why not.

30.X.22
Halloween
and last night
I was running through
the alphabet of all my dead.
Amy and Allen and on
down the dark hallways where
their power, beauty, meaning
still stand, marble come alive,
mothers of color, fathers of form,
they made me, I mourn them
best by doing everything I can.

31 October 2022

= = = = =
Naming things, not making up names, let Adam do that or Utnapishtim, no, just saying the names as they are, how powerful it is to say sandstone or salmon in the pool under the hazelnut tree, or just the names without even places or verbs to marry them,
just pillow and dagger and den,
fire hydrant, crow feather, lung.

31 October 2022
= = = = = =

*Earth sky be different from all other skies* so it thought in me, I dare not mute a migrant meaning happens to my head, Thinking says what it sys, I listen. I have always been obedient as loud as I can.

31 October 2022

= = = = = =
T.E. in memoriaqmq

Where the quetzal sings
a friend went to listen,
escaped from winter,
the shiverings rivy,
snow deep on the roof.
And where the quetzal
sings he heard English spoken,
found friends with no shirts on,
sunshine, sea coast, intimate
knowledge of wave ad surf.
When spring came he went home
when woolen neighbors asked
what he’d been up to he sang
O I have heard the quetzal sing.

31 October 2022
PELERINAGE DE LA VIE HUMAINE

Walk with them, the pilgrims, let your feet imagine their feet moving mindfully along some country road. Where? Wherever pilgrims go—the going is what matters, not the goal.

When you get there in mind or body you will have been changed. Subtly, deeply, no one
will notice for a while, not even you. You still will speak English or whatever, still choose coffee over tea, still swoon at Beethoven. But something softly slyly will be differing in you, day by day. Something like happiness. Something a little closer to truth.

31 October 2022