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Walk on the water.
Two ducks
far off on the west pond
seemed to.
Maybe still frozen there,
maybe just a seeing
what is not.
We do that all the time
and call it Vatican, Parliament,
Himalayas, dream.
Rub my hands, keep them warm
and the ducks fly away.
2. Images live us. That’s what I mean or thought I did when I first began to see. Even now the sun is rising roof wet with rain.

3. Forget fora moment what the word means and just pay attention to what it says.
4.
Bcause mouth matters,
mouth means.
The trees are dark today
but that’s just me.

5.
Open a chestnut
sit by the fire.
A radiator will do,
keep the knees warm–
you need them to pry on.

6.
These little waltzes
lead nowhere,
dances never do,  
are not supposed to,  
maybe lovers in bed  
but that’s not a destination,  
only a way station.  
And here’s another.

7.  
Could it be now already?  
In sleep I knocked the pillow off,  
a deed I feel I must atone for,  
slowly, slowly, afternoon  
is a forgiving sort of time,  
I can jardly wait.
8. Country dances they called them, contra-dance is what they heard, dance against the music, press your body firmly to the silences. This is the sure way to get there, the other end of every dance.

9. I’m being theoretical, like a candle outdoors, midnight, flickering in the wind. Theoretical, how long will this flame persist, goon giving even the little light it gives?
10.
One hour one car only goes by.
They’re all still busy in last night.
Time wraps around us, we struggle in the blankets, the pillows topple, the dream breaks in half. No wonder the rod’s empty.

11.
No wonder sky’s blue.
The rain there was went away, where
did it go, travelers
all round us, over
and under. blue and green,
my fingers are still cold, see?

12.
I thought of the plover
we saw once at Barges Beach,
killdeer they call it
mimicking its call.
Big for a little bird,
brown and lusty,
peaceful as we stood
so near and watched.
Sometimes fear
forgets to come,  
or goes away like rain.  
Such a sad name  
to call him by!  Are we  
really only what  
comes out of our mouths,  
only what we say??

13.  
Don’t look back.  
There is a painting we saw  
if a woman not doing that.  
She leans into a car window  
and we see an empty road  
behind her.  The same island.
But why do we have to see what she is free to forget?
An empty road leads all the way.

14.
Yes, island.
The truest place—hard to tell lies on any island.
Until they build bridges and then the fun begins,
the long deceptions of culture, the brood of advertisers, long banisters on the shaky
stairs to heaven. Keep your island isolate, that pure word the ocean spoke.

15. Locked in the word seeds in the pomegranate, myriad, each different, each the same. Unload by speaking—we tell children that and look it up, as if there really were an it hiding in the dictionary. Say it loud and say it soft and swallow your saliva—
that’s the tune, a word
you can whistle, a word
that feeds you breakfast.

16.
So here the dancers are
under the fluffy palm trees
innocuous music slung
across their path, boys
with big hats, girls in fur,
faux-fur we hope,
and what kind of tropics
are these, why are flakes
of snow flickering past?
Revise the advertisement!
Or better yet, stay home.
17.
Matchless medium, language. Pigments of the truth, all aligned in one neat case..
Seriously now, this is about initiation, Minerva leading us up the empty road in all th glee of a mild day on earth, after a mile she stops and from a well only she knows draws o copper cup of special water. Here,
drink this. The water itself is speaking.

18.
We get there out of breath, but still breathing. We made you out of breath the trees explain, from breath we shaped your bodies to contain it, control it, shape it further on its way back into the world, you breath machines, you lovely silly glorious speakers.

1 January 2023
NIGHT BONDING

Quiet naked people of the coast who come out of the sea at night whenever the tide comes in close to our dear midnight.

Revel in their quiet ways, bodies sleek against one another, pressing close on each other here the way they cannot do in the water, that imperious medium keeps everyone apart.

But here the closeness, in moonlight maybe, or cloud dark, but feel
the other close and then, then bck to the kingdom again, down there, in the mother of all.

2 January 2023
Insignia of infantry,
a pair of sore feet.
And on the aviator’s chest
a little copper parachute
with one cord snapped.

We learn by love
and lose by war.
When will we finally
figure it out?

2 January 2023
ALOHA

when a book says
the word means love
what kind of love
is it talking about?
What kind of love
does a book know?
Mother love or love of cheese,
love that licks the girl
next door in humid dreams,
love at the altar rail,
the wifeless priest marrying
two nervous people
love of God that brought him
to this wifeless business
of marrying other lucky types—
or are they lucky? Is he
the lucky one, left alone
with a love no one can reject,
no Dear John letters from heaven,
no bye-bye, love? What
does love mean, you wise book?
But nooks are all saying
but no hearing. Aloha. Aloha.

2 January 2023

= = = = = =
A little rain
a little wonder
what the noise was
woke me if it did,
was I awake forever
snd the night just a daydream?
Look at the wet ross
and try to remember.

3 January 2023
When I say I
I mean you
and when I say you
I mean unutterly
unimaginable entity
full of glory, tenderness
and truth only you
know the true name of
and how to call it out in the night.

3.1.23
Every week we went and knelt in a closet and through a mesh or grill whispered our sins anxieties and doubts to a priest barely visible who usually seemed caring and interested and wise.

I do that every single day now, hurrying awkward through the mesh of the keyboard try to whisper what seems at that moment to, be truth
to a wise white piece of paper
or even brighter computer screen
but I do miss kneeling in the ark.

3 January 2023
Somewhere in the Balkans
Montenegro maybe
there’s a treasure chest
with notch in it. A silver
ducal coronet bent out of shape,
an amber rosary – Moslem?
no crucifix on it– coins,
a wad of manuscript. Greek
alphabet, but doesn’t sound
Greek when I tease some sound
out of the dense text.
But a few Greek words are there,
bathus, ‘deep”, cbeir, ‘hand’
or do they mean other things
in other languages. I hold the page up to the window—some sun still shines through it.

3 January 2023
Handwritten trauma
over the door, EXIT
it says but don’t
take it too much to heart.
Stay where you are–
the world is on its way.

3.1.23
Open the cookie jar where the bills are kept, drag the old rocking chair out of the garage. Cookies in cookie jars! that should be our motto, closets with no surprises! Now find where I belong.

3 January 2023
FATE

O you, eldest of the Fates, you have sliced open the bread your sisters baked from the wheat of the world they found and ground. Now, young again, you sit on the edge of the table, really young, eating a chunk the you cut off the bread. It is chewy and dark and soft almost sweet of crumb and fierce of crust, you chew it slowly and with pleasure, swinging your legs back and forth. The smiling pussycat clock on the wall swings its pendulum trail side to side, tries to keep time with your bare legs.
swinging. You know time better than any clock does, because you have been old and young, and have been both at once, and outside of time sometimes, that weekend you spent once skiing in pure space on leave from time, or the summer vacation you took in Babylonian antiquity—remember you came back suntanned and with half a dozen alphabets you laid spells on your friends with. Spells that tuched them, made them happy, made their skin glow too. But now you’re, now is simple, now is always simple, or seems so. You sit on the bare wood of the table and
swing your eet forward and back, you’re enjoying the bread, why not, the world was made for you. It’s made for everyone in it, in fact, as you know best of all, you who have been in and out of it, you who saw so many people come and go and come again and who knows. But you know, and each nibble of the bread, each swing of your leg goes further into now. That’s what children are doing when they swing their feet, sitting there, their feet thank God not touching the ground, free to keep walking and walking into now. Of course few of them will ever get
there. But you have, you hold time in your hands now, chewy and sticky and sweet and thick and every bite makes you stronger, nearer, now-er, can I say that, will you let me?

3 January 2023

HOW TO SLEEP WITH A MAN

When you both have finished whatever it is you do or don’t do awake together, after all that, or just this, he falls back asleep into what he thinks is himself.
Now your moment has come. You adjust your limbs, shoulders, hips, head, neck to rest. The rub of your body on the mattress while you do these quiet things messges its way into his body, his ody now in the mute, absolute. And what your body really means, or at lesst what it says, enters deeply into him. It takes form inside him the way a cloud forms over a lake in the mountains, or may spread out inside him like a meadow. In fact, meadows are more common at this moment than clouds, but you can’t be sure ahead of time. Because that’s where you re now, in your
now, but ahead of his time. Your presence draws him forward into a new reality—when he finally wakes up he’ll think it was the wren chirping or the rain dripping that woke him. No beasts needed, and you did your work, healing I’d call it, in a place beyond weather. The wonderful thing about you is that you can do all this while checking your e-mail or planning a weekend in Nantucket or thinking about some other man. Even that will seep into the boy-man snoring alongside you, any you, and fill him with the healing tenderness only the other can bring.
You are the other, and I long to know your name. But I’m still sleeping.

4 January 2023

Can’t elope
they told me
but why? No
girl I knew,
and why a fruit
so cold, so cold,
who would want
to run away with it
to the Algarve
just to be warm
or Hawaii or even
Narrowsburg New York
in summertime, o river!
The fruit was sort f sweet,
a little choky in the gullet.
I like sweet things but
the price was high,
so cold, so cold,
I would never run
away with one
and yet so smooth,
solid, packed tight
with juice to chew,
maybe I can,
maybe we can,,
just one afternoon,
not even a canoe.

4.1.23

Mist persists.

The glamorous Parisian streetlights in fog our little country road performed last night have dimmed and the grey monochrome takes over, like a faded old movie on a black and white TV
shimmers in its own gorgeous way out
my plain young window—
glass is always young,
always remembering
life as seaside sand,
Rockaway, Waikiki.
The mist too is made
of tininess, crystals
of water, grains of air.

4 January 2023
EYESIGHT

Post-literature,
I can read your face
but not your book,
read your face, sometimes
how your body talks,
moves, means,
but not your words,
only the words
you say out loud,
Be near me, speak
be, plese, and say
while I still remember
what words mean.

4.1.23
I am ashamed to be ashamed of being ashamed.

4.1.23, lune
Across the quiet density of trees cables stretch ythrough my vision spesking the world into our lives. They look so straight, stiff, orderly, direct against all flourish of all the livng things around. I think language is very old, must be helped into the house.

4 January 2023
BREAK.

The word alone
wnts to say.
Mostly morning,
mostly out there.
Can mean news
or analysis or
time to take in.
Gladdest saddest
of could be.
Sounds like make.
Sounds like wake.
One more worry–
leap up. Or down forever.

5.1.23
A DECREE

of the Council of Chalcedon slips my mind. Why can’t it all stay in place?
A name should be a briefcase stuffed with information—now it’s an unmarked cardboard box in the garage. Spiders, beware..
What did they decree about the the life to come. what did they say that I so badly need to know and where dies everything go?

5 January 2023
I dreamt a new ritual
had to be done,
added t the day as we know it.
And you would teach it to me
so we could do it together,
a rite with bowls of offering.
silver or brass, and one bowl
scooped into a foot-tall
chunk of a tree trunk,
bowl dug in actual wood.
I was apprehensive, of course—
ritual obsesses. Ritual
wraps whole days around
its little finger and suddenly
the sun is setting
and who am I now?
Am I changed? Then I woke.
The ritual was gone.
But the questions lingered.

5 January 2023
White bus slow up road
how tender
this old world can be.

5.1.23, lune
i forget what city
we were in
but it was my fault.
The bus roared by
without stopping.
That was my fault too.
If there’s one thing
I’m good at it’s
taking the blame.
I’m bot so good at knowing why.

5.I.23
SHAFER HOUSE

A lot of what I used to mean is across the street up three flights of stairs and I haven’t been there in a year. Virtual classes then, retirement now. I look over at the white building wondering, just wondering.

5.1.23
Free association—
how wonderful
if it were really true.
Or even possible.
Come dance with me
sitting still in the corner
while housewives of Cochecton
stare sadly at the Delaware.
A day of sometime sun
the window winked at me,
eat your nice light now
who knows what’s later.
O Sun O busy Mother of all, this
moment cures the whole day.

5 January 2023
I need the Pope’s permission to say what I mean. 
So I change my religion but that doesn’t work any better. 
The words still keep coming around and over and under but not what I mean. Not what I tremble with eagerness to say and I don’t even know what it is! So I pray to the angels to tell me and they say: Keep talking, urgent articulate uncertainty is a gift you’ve been given to give.

5 January 2023
Let me be a color
on your palette,
paint me into your world
even if only here and there,
apple fallen from tree,
shadow on a brick wall.
Anywhere. Everywhere.
I think my tint will last.

5 January 2023
= = = = =

Research preference
check your pocket
dust on doorsill
stains on tissue
taste of morning.

Find who you are
footnote by footnote
lick the wound
pat the kitty but
never consult the index,
all that small print
hurts your lies.

6 January 2023
EPIPHANY

This day is called the Showing but every dy does. This one throbs with the power of what is shown. A child straight from heaven through a human body. Would God that every child could be so seen, and we might all our lives kneel to what is shown.

6 January 2023
When the fur began to fly
the wings sat back and watched.
We live in a sea of idioms
and sometimes flounder,
brotherly love, motherly swoon.
And I was a fish once too.

6.1.23
Don’t see many rabbits these days. too many hawks and eagles. America loves birds, of prey, pictures itself soaring over every land and everyone. At times I feel like a rabbit.

6.1.23
If you listen carefully
you'll hear a
human heartbeat
in the core of every word.

6.1.23
WHAT

What will I see out this window? And what if the what is a who, and who will they be? And what will she say and what will he finally understand?

7 January 2023
REMEMBERING

Robert Duncan, 7 January 1919

The numbers get jumbled
and as you worked so diligently
to demonstrate the rime
is hard to find—it isn’t
just in the sound, I learned that
from you, and so much more.

Numbers get tangled,
but you’re at the breakfast table
in pale pajamas, autumn
lawn outside window,
at your elbow as you wrote,
tall white pines beyond lawn.
You’re writing with a Parker 51 just like mine, the one my father gave me, the one I write with all the time, now seeing it in your hand made me feel it was a sign, like a token for this novice, me, allowed at last to enter an ancient sodality of song.

It felt complete I mean, to see you sitting at my table writing in a simple copy book the way any of us would, do, who still, if they can, use pens.
The sodality of H.D., and Ezra, and Rilke, and all those I loved and loved to read, brotherhood of sisters, sorority of guys. Because language is sexiest of all the minds we have. Or does that mean the numbers are tumbled all over me again and I’m old? You’re 104 today, two decks of cards, ordinary cards like uncles used to play, poker maybe, but I can’t see either of us content with that. Our cards are the busy virgins, wizards of Tarot, towers
and lovers and even Tennyson
or a lute with one missing string
but by Jove ot still makes music!
Juno, I mean. You taught me
not to be ashamed of what I mean.

7 January 023
PARKWAY

Reality if I’m lucky
is a parkway
four lanes
between two dividers
with one-way lane
beyond each,
and on those long
walking islands benches
to snooze and watch the traffic
and a stately line of trees,
linden mostly, on and on,
making the distance green.
If you’re from Brooklyn you’ll think of the great Olmstead animal that stretches from Brownsville straight to Grand Army Plaza, gets statelier by the yard, all the way to the triumphal arch. And if you’re from Brooklyn it’s hard enough to think of anything else.

7 January 2023
Wear bright clothes when you run on roads. Crows dare wear black but they can fly.

7.1.23
Don’t count the words, count the spaces. That’s where the meaning lies in wait. Linger and learn.

7.1.23
Let’s call the sun Sheila and Seamus the moon and write a new epic of how love grows the world. Or Julia and James if you’re down on the Celts or Jacques et Julie if you’re making a movie instead of an old tribe of words migrating through manuscript. But tell the story at least, at last, Each thing alive,& its life lives us.

8 January 2023
The gas station on the corner has a new brick wall. Brick, intricately readable good old brand new bricks legible as Faneuil Hall, Downing Street or my old house, new songs with old words, brushstrokes, lines baked into each, read me, read me! the wall keeps shouting, I am wise as the Parthenon for my stone is made by you.

8 January 2023
Equip each impulse with a rubber band will snap it back in place. In this way great art is made, and crime is thwarted. Poor Van Gogh in the corn field when the rubber broke.

8 January 2023
Turn away from away, 
kiss the doorframe 
of your door. Rest 
in the quiet entry way. 
You have come through. 
You are here at last. 
This is where the work 
begins. The silent house 
begins ever so quietly 
to sing inside you, 
table, chair, window 
busy with intelligent light.

8 January 2023
The comic book rocket ship lands on the child’s pillow. He climbs aboard and sails off to a nearby planet, Venus, say, where the girls are. But he’s too young for girls, so he just walks around, picks up a few flowers, an old rubber ball on the lawn until the ship yanks him back, rough landing on his pillow and he wakes up. Why isn’t everything still green?

8 January 023
NOW

Now is always sitting on our laps. But when a birthday comes Now slips off and hauls out snapshots, bulging albums, old home movies, love letters, greeting cards, videos, tapes—the terrifying testimony of time, dumps it on the dinner table so all kinds of people come in and mill around to study the evidence, marvel, deplore, get teary with reminiscence, yawn. Then Now comes close
settles back on the knees, whispers, See, aren’t I really better than all that? Marry me.

8 January 2023
We belong to the first time
we see someone
and they presumably to us.
But that’s not clear.
What is, is this question:
Do I care more about how
I feel about X than I do
about what X feels about me.
Danger. Here happiness
can run off the road. Danger.
Here desire can blur vision.
Or the other way round, a keen
eye, an empty bed, empty heart.

8 January 2023
Same yellow jersey jogs through trees, blends in with sunshine.

6.1.23, lune
SUNDAY

The year is one week old. Clement weather so far, grateful. Strange to think after all the fuss of New Years we are already in it, the new year is the now year so get to work. Trees full of sunshine, a new week takes off.

8.1.23
Listen to the opera but watch the orchestra. Rescue the music from the story. No need to watch women pretend to die or men pretend to love them. Verdi did all that for you. Watch the conductor showing off or just close your eyes.

8 January 2023
Lake after lake
I hurry over
on my way to you,
five big ones come first
each bigger than
the one before,
then an endless pasture
with a thousand lakes, then none
for a while until even I
(and water is my middle name),
bEGIN to lose hope but then
a biggie shows up full of salt
with all kinds of odd people
who think the Lord came here,
America, and I think so too but that’s another story, and then no more lakes, no more lakes, I flounder over mountains and then at last I see it, biggest lake of all, other arm of my own sweet sea, warmer too, and there you are, instructing a sea gull or nibbling a burrito so finally I can swoop down to cry in my best crow Happy Birthday, Barbara you’re worth the flight.

8 January 2023
MOONRISE

for Susan, her birthday

The moon was just rising, just a day past full, just calling for you, he always does, you with your camera or me with my book or who knows who he really wants when he climbs over the linden trees and says Here I am, make something of me. And you do—you take the face of him, yes, but you take the time of him, the steady wavering certainty
of his arrival. Soon, you say, soon it will be now again when we all belong, belong to one another. So watching the moon rise is coming home, staying home on a winter night, slowly beginning to understand what we have seen in the sky. Or what we thought was the sky.

8.1.23
What happens if you speak and there is no one near, how far does the word go, will it go, to find a hearer? I guess across the Hellespont, English Channel, broad Atlantic, no one will stop it except by hearing what it says. Be brave, stand on the cliff and speak.
So be it
bird or best
allow me
later
to decide,
now is for knowing
not choosing,
identity is the most
arbitrary of all.
Now watch me fly.

9 January 2023
The rational is ready always, come in the gondola
and float high over doubts,
they look cute down there like worried sheep,
no shepherd for miles,
comforting each other by imagining worse.
Meantime we float in peace along the grand canal of the sky watching history pass by,
old houses, bridges to nowhere.

9 January 2023
Wasn’t it easy
in the old days
when each party
had a paper of its own
so you knew who you were
by what newspaper you read?
Now you have to make up your own
mind—what a waste of time.

9.I.23
A book, a bowling ball,
a postcard from Tangiers.
You work it out–
I’m tored of knowing it all.

9.!.23
I THOUGHT OF PHILADELPHIA

but they all moved away. Maybe an RV to cruise what Cabeza de Vaca called this land of the shipwrecks, America, still unknown. Carolina sounds like a song, Arkansas like a man at work, Tennessee a long string of beads, ‘m a little afraid of going to see for myself. So stay home with the clamorous doubts, glad comforts of the ordinary, wait for Mississippi to come see me.

9 January 2023
The room is light enough now to find my way back to sleep. We swim in paradox, like plump bankers off the beach at Dieppe.

9.1.23
RADIANT SURFACE

That slim canal in Venice
under the Sospiri,
light leaps upward
between what we have built,
inherited, imagined, known. Light
comes from the ground
to answer the Sun. There,
my heresy is out in the o/pen,
the stone made me say it,
the water insisted,
all that salt and all for me!
Think of the tiny grains
white on your palm
when you look away from soup
and look at your own,
is it really your own, hand?
Is it more yours than the salt is?
We hurry back to Venice
to find out. The Doge is dead,
the Patriarch is three levels
of secretary away. So ask
the lagoon, it knows the story,
tt shimmers with conviction–
take my advice, stand right
on the brink and look down
and study your reflection.
You are new-born from the sea.

9 January 2023
Because I was fat in those days they made me play Boss Tweed in the school play, was it Up in Central Park? Or Carousel? Some 29th Century story, happy endings all round but not for me, I mean that me, fugitive, safe in Spain, died. It left me with no taste for corruption or influence or gangs. Or even Spain. And I can’t act anyway—no memory for words.

9.1.23
Two girls giggling standing together in the almost empty subway car. Juno and Artemis, A new planet will rise tomorrow, they’re planning it now, all the sweet details. I learned pretty early subways lead to the sky.

9 January 2023
Meteor fell somewhere else, off the coast of Bali
I heard it through my pillow
and you were there!
to scoop it, the wave it made,
carry a ewer of it home to distill.
And soon you had the elixir
called Bringing News from Somewhre Utterly Else.
I took a teaspoon of it too.

10 January 2023
Not much color out there today, subtlety can be too close to irony yet it’s lovely, what I see out my truthful window, differences gently excusing themselves, soft confusion of the bare trees, so many, o close, they seem in leaf again, or never altogether bare. On a day like this we see the living specters of green, soft as reminiscence, clean prophecy.

10 January 2023
I spent the night
in one of the smaller
castles on the Rhine,
golden stone, red turret.

I was the local polymath
brought in to tutor
the baron’s little son,
a pleasant job, but it rained
hard at dusk so they kindly
put me up for the night,
not ride home in the storm.
They set me a place even at the family table, fed me, and the baron’s wife asked many questions, could I for example explain to her just what Luther’s famous theses nailed to the church door actually said or demanded? Could I explain why Dürer could get a rhinoceros just right but most couldn’t do elephants? And how did the Romans publish poems and essays and history if they didn’t know about books?
I was impressed that she cared about such things, and she was pretty too. The child looked bored through all of this, but that’s a child’s job at dinner, dazed at the alarming spectacle of hat he too will soon become.

10 January 2023
The sky’s lightening,
she’s coming!
Now it’s up to us.

10.1.23, lune
Open some old book,
read new words
you have never seen.

10.1.23, lune
I have been all the colors. Red hair, blue eyes, brown in study, green with inexperience, white–hair again, yellow with chronic timidity, purple with imperial self-importance, black inky fingers ad busy books. And a doctor made me spend two weeks eating only oranges–as many as I liked. But still...

10 January 2023
Don’t you know even yet that your body knows more than you do?

Across the room a man is standing looking out the window. Your left hip knows him, knows what he sees.

And the delicate skin under your right arm almost trembles with its knowledge
of what that child earnestly
rolling his toy train around
on the silencing carpet feels.
Ask your flesh. The flesh is wise.

10 January 2023
SOUL SONATA

Soul sonata
it said in sleep,
soft hiss or breath
in the sinuses,
now wake to reason
what the night meant.

2.
Or get it wrong,
all our long decisions.
Is breath the sojl,
is breathing our only religion?
3. Spy out te window
spread on the lawn
the shadow of the very
house you’re sitting in—
the amazing testimony
of every sunrise.

4. Seductive because
it makes noo sound.
No arguing with silence.

5. Then he drew out from the dark
a tattered opusculum from the Renaissance when they still worried boyt the soul, before reason swirled her skirts nd lured them away, he handed igt to ,me, counldn’t read a word of it.

6. But I could smell the leaves—dust and drought and glue, everything an argument would need, plausible, probably true so I held it in my hands..
7.
A sonata has three legs, fool, what are you doing with seven? But he didn’t say that, didn’t have to. Most of us are born ashamed already.

8.
I would plead it takes a while to shift from foot to foot to get the footing right to go and go on, and incidentally that’s how the dance got born. Nt running from bears. Just shifting around in sunshine
watching your shadow move.

9.
If I had a narrative
it would stop here.
Narr means fool
in German, remember that–
all your telling
ends only halfway there.

10.
My telling, I mean,
the whispered guesswork
of not quite enough dream.
More dream! Less deciding!
11.
Softly,, soothe me, sospiri, bridge of sighs, every is, I mesn every bridge a yielding, a sad farewell, shimmering unknown of the far shore, bridge of sighs, bridge of why ever leave this one place if ever you find yourself there.

12.
I think of John Navins
who lived here for eighty years and never crossed the river even once, though a city lured from the other side once they built a bridge a mile away. They carried him over when he died. He was postman of Barrytown, through is hands all the words would come and go and he would stay.

13.
That’s the scary part of dance—
no more Istabul, no Katmandu,
just fox in the backyard puzzled by
how loud humans breathe.

14.
it must be something like this:
sitting alone in a room
is romancing with the beautiful
stranger, your breath,
so close, coming close,
sighing away, in and out,
never altogether married,
but never eaves yu alone.

15.
There, that’s dance
enough for a weekday morning
Wotan’s day in fact,
that mercurial god who wanders
through us with a walking staff.
he pounds it on empty air
and we wake, we read
his footsteps and call it time,
we never get it right
but also always do.
I love paradox—don’t you?

16.
Soul sonata. A sonata
has three parts:
breathe in, hold, breathe out.
The middle movement is the quietest, it’s where all the information settles into and sinks below consciousness, leaves us fee for the next powerful song as we breathe in.

17.
See, music never lies. That’s what they were trying to tell me when they poked me awake with a leg cramp and whispered about sonatas.
Soul sonata, they said
and so I did.

18.
No need for Venice,
Sit here with me
breathing quiet
and call it singing.

11 January 2023
When we go down at evening
to sit by the river
I feel like I’m visiting my mother,
my real one, who loved water,
ocean or lake, who sat
in her ast days by a salt creek
feeding the swans.
No swans here but the sea sings.

11 January 2023
Hear the train not far away
on a sunny day
when night’s the norm
for such music,
so bright and yet
the rumble half
a mile away,
the hoot of its salute
approaching the lagoon.
We see what we hear
even when it’s far away.

11.I.23
THE REACH

It’s not so hard to stretch out a hand, meadows do it all the time, and mothers often, see, the light dances across the grassland of your palm, who knows what hand will answer yours, or what coin drop in, or bird think to perch one moment and hare his endless flight with yours.

2.
Outside, the snow starts and stops. Everything asks something of us. Deal with me because I am here, study your role, sing your part.

3.
I mean the hand is just the start. Stretch out your will, your mind, your love. Emotional intensity is all we really have
to work with in this
Aloine wilderness
of ordinary life.
Your hand, for instance,
your fingers warm.

12 January 2023
The weather didn’t listen to the weather report. It snowed anyhow, still at it, despite the clement prophecies of those plausible blondes we see on TV with graphs, maps swimming behind them. Snow. Or sňaw, as the Irish say up north, or sneg in Russia, white, and luminous and always a surprise.

12 January 2023
Once in a while time stops but we don’t notice.

Hawk motionless overhead we think rests on a current of earth’s uplifted breath.

No. Time had stopped. We look up and don’t realize and then the clockwork starts again, the hawk swoops down, the chipmunk barely escapes,
and we go on with what it is we think we’re doing. But in that timeless space the definitions changed.

12 January 2023
Each time the flag flaps
the wid is reproaching
our national pride.
Being alive is politics enough,
be a proud citizen of now.

12.l.23
Twelve days into a new month 
and I am no more january-er 
than before. O Time 
let me catch up with thee, 
or in thy sheltering shadow sleep.

12 January 2023
In the middle of a moment there is a mind.

But how dare you say such a thing to me, she said, as if I were a student in your Roman ruin school—don’t mumble your verities at me, mlister, I breathe a fresher air, no need for time and all the tricks of reason.
bashed, I apologized to her, told her truthfully I didn’t even know she was so close, or anybody was even listening. And I still want to know what a moment’s mind means.

12 January 2023
Have some respect for the weather—
it’s what we all share.

12.I.23, lune
for Sherry her birthday

The cat stared at you
the way they do.
But this is not about the cat.
I watched you sitting
across the table from me
But this is not about me.

You sit skeptically,
with your own special
mastery gravity.
At any moment elsewhere
could spread out at your feet.
You don’t quite believe the chair you’re sitting on. Or the table. Or me. But this is not about me. It’s about you, the way you look at things, look with eyes ever curious, seldom convinced by all they see, but they see, and you see, see too with your hands, sketch accurate pictures of what isn’t even there. Except they’re in you. So this turns out to be all about you.

12.I.23
We were walking in the hills, people do, the hills put up with much worse. And on a steep stretch of what was barely a path you spotted a little yellow flower in bloom just out of reach on a rock wall. At once you squirmed up, one foot prodding at the rock, to reach the flower. I stood close behind you in case you fell. And you did, slip down th rock and up against me, no harm no hurt. But in that moment
when body pressed suddenly full weight against body, in that contact all your wisdom, intelligence, exuberance, hope, flowed gently into me. Perhaps whatever I am flowed into you. How can I know what is in me. You looked at me and smiled, showed me your empty hands. But the smile saud clearly We have found our flower.

12 January 2023
ANGLICAN MEASURES

Quiet insinuations
of space within distance,
precious gallery
of indoor shadows,
lifetime of glances,
remembering.
Anglican music,
reedy insistence
of the organ,
not too big,
in a church the same
out in the dawn
light of winter
audible over
so many meadows. And what you hear you carry with you, a while, a whim, nothing obsessive, sly as a prayer slips through the day.

That’s what the night brought me, dim light of not yet dawn street lights still on, cars all ablaze, the few of them that dared the dwindle time, the menacing day. But the words were far away, hearing grey not-yet-music sifted over the fields, Somerset or the hills. And when an image or
idea is not quite there, that’s the very moment you must answer them, ask them, I can talk with them, let them toy with you, make you make a sound you hope is singing.

13 January 2023
How itself
everything is

he sang
and smiled his way
among certainties,

every day though
was Sunday in his book,

and gold could turn
in his hands back
into red clay, this
alchemist of absolutes.
Fir him first is best, patriot of dawn, cantor in this endless synagogue of stars.

13 January 2023
A staircase is a scary thing, 
be sent up to bed or bck down 
to work, and always 
at its measured gait, not yours, 
nothing natural, lift, drop, hope for the banister. 
No wonder I so love escalators—think of Jerusalem, 
deepest subway
stop of all, ride
the moving
stairs, rise
from the earth itself.

13 January 2023
Don’t talk about it, don’t tell.

It is enough to switch the lights on, put the milk back in the fridge, sweep crumbs off, the counter, sit at the window, no need to remember

Look out there—sometimes the grey sky
seems mottled with subtle shapes and meanings, red what you see but eep silent. Talk comes later, when others come along and make you speak. Now rest alert, the taste still in our teeth.

13 January 2023
LOCKJAW

Terrified of it
when we were children,
heart about it all the time.
Now don’’t even know what it is.
Is it possible bad
things sometimes go away
all by themselves?
And every hour has its angel.

13 January 2023
Gremlins scratching at the door. But I will open up only for smiling Jehovah’s Witnesses with tracts in hand.

I rabbit on to them bout the Bible, my readings, until they politely make their escape. But we have spoken! Talked with one anoither! Isn’t that what religion’s for?

13.I.23
Wet gravel of the parking lot from half a furlong off looks like a little lake where magic cars can float—maybe that’s why are no cars parked there now.

13.1.23
A message tied to the iron gate in an unknown alphabet. Does it mean Hello, I came by and you weren’t home. Or Open at your peril. So untie the string carefully—never cut message free—, step back and push the gate open with your left foot. You’ve done all you can do. The rest is up to destiny, or karma. Sorry, that’s just you again
disguised as history. Walk in, be brave, you can’t get away from yourself. Enter the house. Maybe you even live here.

14 January 2023
THE ASTROLOGER

s
RUBS his chubby hands
and says Happy Birthday, now
I know who you really are,
you have no secrets
from the stars. slap him
or sock him, defending
on gender. He has no right
to your numbers. Birth
is what you’ve been trying
to forget all this while,
your poor Moon sweltering
between the paws of Leo.

14 January 2023
time for tomorrow!
But first the stumbling through this cluttered basement of a whole day, scheduled, peopled, long.
Hours and hours later it is still today. What to do?
There is an invisible staircase that climbs through time.
Shut your eyes, find it in the dark

14 January 2023
Walking on the temple roof
gentle curve of the broad dome,
I followed them, hoping to find
who they are who walk
before me. Are they aware being of
me following, pr they in fact
leading men on and on?
Temples aee strange places
even on the outside, the skin
they choose to show to heaven.
I walk with caution, but I follow.

15 January 2023
I glanced up at the TV and saw an animal, bear big or wombat smaller, too close-up to tell.

What was that creature I asked, and you said None—that was a rock on a hill, close up. Oh, I said, deceived, but not relieved.

The animal I saw was still in my mind, even now, great brown hulk of someone
about to rise, heave his way into the sky. Then what happens to me, only me, his only witness, victim or uneasy owner of this instantaneous permanent pet?

15 January 2023
These days when I have to write the month down I keep starting September. It’s not the weather, clement as it is for January. Could I be planning to be born again, early maybe, a Virgin at last?

15 January 2023
The word is waitig.
That’s why we’re here in body to say it, spit it out as we say to each other, say it, it takes so many years ti say it, so many mouths. Come on, say it, who knows,
it might be close
to being said,
be heroic, speak
what comes to
the mouth of the mind.

15 January 2023
THE RESEMBLANCE

Unremarkable. Most of them look that way, most of us, I mean, why should it surprise, don’t we all have wings? Don’t we wear them furled nestled by the shoulder bones and seldom shake them loose and even more seldom fly? And yet we do, admit it, you do, every now and then, take off, soar sunward or skim the rooftops of our sweet neighborhood. So why should a mosaic of an angel
on a church wall annoy you? Is it the fluttery white robes? I agree, angels should be naked, the way the world is when we fly.

15 January 2023
Ripe avocado palpable,
a rugged green heart.

15.1.23, lune
The somatic version will be with us a bit longer so take advantage the body while t lasts, before the electronic model hits the market, then say good-bye to corduroy and ice-cream cones or are they gone already?

15 January 2023
TO THE RIVER

The best part is waiting, watching the sky, how it shimmers on the river then soars back home.

2. When you sit by the river you naturally think of home, childhood home, mother time, everything to be learned again in a new way, new language, but the swans are still white, you almost know who they are.
3.
Need water, some of us, every day, not swallow to lubricate the soft machine but to see, see every day the waves of genesis.

4.
Some choose to go to church in kayaks or canoes. I prefer to sit
quiet on the shore,
all river and no me.
Effortless liberation,
swimming heavenward
on patience alone.

5.
I think when Jesus said
if you want to pray
go alone into the inmost
room and pray to the father
He also meant go down
to the river, pray to the mother.

6.
But they forgot to write it dpwn
maybe they waited so we could find our way to water over the deserts of the rational.

7.
If I could
I would kneel
by the water’s edge
and whisper
Mother, mind me!
then rest there and wait.
The best part is waiting.

16 January 2023
What are we going to say or do or make or go or sing on your birthday? Start with saying–says does and does and makes, saying goes and goes singing, every word an hour-long symphony slow to hear, the simplest words take longest to understand, the hap or happy, the day of birthday, and the glorious, laborious, notorious, magnificent you, the you to whom all words
are tumbling in a rush to speak, to you of Happy Birthday, you who hears them all and sings them with so pure a voice.

16 January 2023
It doesn’t seem dangerous but you never know. Packages are ominous, envelopes are sly. Or think of a door swinging open by itself. Or not itself at all but—no, don’t think of that. I am an apostle of anxiety but even I won’t think of that. Take a few words not too many, and hide under the covers, hear them and pray for sleep.

16 January 2023
Many an atheist loves to play pool. I can’t understand how they can endure this inconsistency. Or maybe they are really super-theists, trying to be God rolling planets around.

16 January 2023
Woke before word—what now?
grim game waiting to grasp me,
hollow hammering from heaven,
wind whispering but no words,
Wallow in wooziness and wait
safe a few centuries in sleep?

17 January 2023
I shook the silence and it slapped me back. How girl of you I retorted, more mused than angry but it hurt. Not too much—enough to make me never shake silence again before it comes close, close, and sighs a word or two in my ear.

17 January 2023
What I thought of as beginning was already halfway there, Daylight already, the road clear. But steep is the grade and slick the paving stone or is it me, all the obstacles of travel built into the traveler himself, legs and breath and the faltering will to go on. But already I could see way up ahead the old white cottage on the mountainside, the one the books ll promised, blue shutters, shaking in wind.

17 January 2023
I turn on the news and they give me weather instead. Or are they the right ones? Weather is what happens—weather always new, a tree the wind knocks down will never stand up again. Politics is mostly weather, middle-aged men trying their damndest to imitate erosion, thunder, tornado.

17.I.23
When will it start again, the natural, he flow? I asked Duncan in a dream, he wore robes the way any California seraph would, white as sea foam and softly he said Wait for the beginning, that silvery salmon in your murky Irish pool, you’ve always loved the messy, mixture is your message, meld the sords you have, watch them slither on the table.
like two sisters far apart
playing Scrabble on video,
you love the confusion,
don’t despair now of desires—
what else do we have
to write with or remember?
So carefully, legibly, lay it
out before the Queen—
what you thik of as the crowd—
believe me, young Robert,
the crowd wears a crown.

17 January 2023
The caravan about to start
I said. No, she answered, you have been upright all night on your camel and the sand remembers all you said and did.

17 January 2023
Brick wall in Avignon
dark green bushes all round,
some danger in its leaves,
can’t remember the name
in French, oleander in English,
and I just keep seeing them,
intensity of feeling, fear poison,
rich delight in what I saw, see,
nourishment of memory
after the words are gone.
As if the sun wasn’t enough, sunglasses make it all yellower. This is a simple observation, true only of amber or sepia lenses. This is not a complaint. Meaningless if glass is green.

18 January 2023
REAL ESTATE AD

Think of stanzas of the poem not as episodes in a TV serial but as rooms in a house. Stanza used to mean room in Italian. but this is your house now, all your rooms are here, right now, just feel free to move about in them. Free to linger as long as you like, spend the night there, skip breakfast, hurry through the next few stanzas till you come to rest in some chamber bright as noon. This is what the poet hopes
will happen, and why he builds such walls of silence between one outburst of song & the next to let the reader choose to slip in and listen, or close the door.

18 January 2023
The building next door on the corner was under reconstruction, I walked in, all glass and marble, an elevator even, though only three story, fresh bathroom, ceramic plaque over each urinal, mine showed a lover’s heart tangled in religious fervor, very moving, empty building, I could use it, but no parking, no transportation, this little neighborhood on Long Island
or was it south of Boston
but no ea anywhere in sight.
Where could I be coming from
to have reached this point?
How much could I afford to pay?

19 January 2023
Back to the oleanders of Avignon
or yet again the night blooming
jasmines by the lake, midnight
Montreux? Sometimes Mnemosyne,
deity of urgent mindfulness, brings
to mind
images you think are memories
but they are living beings
She entrusts to our care.
I’m still with the hydrangeas
of Brown Street in Brooklyn,
the pussy-willow by the gate.
That’s the secret of those roses
old poems fetched ,from Persia,
once you see a flower it stays with you, they bloom in us, we are the perpetual springtime for which they yearn, and we cherish them, sometimes hardly noticing until, until some random word or picture or even smell makes me serve the vast fields of blue lavender by the Cavaillon.

19 January 2023
CM/RK

My wife’s initials in Latin give some sense of her value—
one hundred thousand, while mine in Greek announce a beginning.

19.I.23
Suppositious arrivals.
Hmm. The words
got here before I did.

And soon she’ll come too,
she said, furling her umbrella
though it’s still wet. Friends.

It drips quietly in the corner
by the door. She wants to talk
philosophy, I don’t care for it,
complexity is too simple
a gift to the mind. I demand
sorting radical, like a song,
o a rose, or a steering wheel even if I’m not driving. Then
her partner is at the door, carrying a fish—I suppose we are t cook this together, joyous cannibals feasting on yet another sentient being.

Gish to fridge. We to table. He wants to talk about music, I perk up but he means folk. I am of no folk that I can hear. Or tell. What a bad host I am, always wanting to be told interesting things, their lives
for instance, what they did in Jakarta and why there, or why she takes so many pictures in the zoo. I love her wombat in Washington!

20 January 2023
Here, hold this baton, try to guide for a few moments the destiny of humankind. No, leave the tigers alone, and the leprechauns. Just people, stay with people, show them what to do. See, it’s not so easy. Maybe next time you bitch about fate you’ll remember this feeble stick in your frightened fingers.
The song
hops over the wall
leaves one
little smear on brick
like lipstick.
So I lift the music
to my lips
and taste what you
really mean.

20 January 2923
Time to take stock
the child heard
so went to Wall Street
and asked foursome.
They smiled at him
and put him on a bus
to some town in Jersey
where they speak English.
He grew up to be mayor.

21 January 2023
The desktop closed its eyes—a warning. Careful when the laptop opens. All keyboards full of danger, Full of future. Think of Opus 111. Rejoice too in all I have not said.

21 January 2023
Too nervous to say more?
Time for a psalm.
Squirrel is to tree
as I am to thee.
Or maybe not that one
but I have to live somewhere
and numbers are too itchy.
A name is comfy, I can sink down
into the sound of saying you.

2.
had a pet turtle for a reason–
don’t do too well with obstacles,
I have to walk around the pebble,
circumambulate each mistake, 
lowest of profiles to keep safe, 
all the human words 
rattling off my shell.

3. When you look at all the bre trees 
sky beyond them looks like a wall 
smooth pale wall of a bedroom 
and you know you’re right t home.

4. Well, that was comforting, tender 
even, for a moment ot wo.
But why should there be any moment but now?

5. Why is it always a woman who plays the harp, the big one in the orchestra so we see her hands move so gently to touch the sound so full? Would men just shred the thig, harp stings flying and no sound but pain? Admit it: her hands know how to sing.

6.
Look up the etymology of psalm. Missing, like phonebooks and cigarette machines.
I should forgive the world for changing, since it forgives me. What are you talking about, Rupert, stick to the program, look up the word. It’s not wise to keep a word waiting.

7.
This tragic opera by Gilbert & Sullivan, this poignant threnody for pennywhistle,
shut me up and make me speak.

8.
It’s all coming out right—
Osqlm is a song
must be played on a harp,
psalm means what is plucked,
plucked, her long pale hands
in the drk orchestra, lucidly
fingering the song my words must find.

9.
Remember in Lorca’s great poem
how Dvid cut the strings of his harp
In men, grief turns to quickly
into anger.
Slash the harp, the song makes do with sobbing. And there’s nothing left but politics and war.

10.
I keep trying to tell you how hard I’m trying to tell. But flowers keeoo creeping out the way they do in springtime, as if each word gre petals and the bees of intellect come to feed. Too elaborate a metaphor, pardon, but you know what I mean.
And even all this is praise, proper business for a psalm. praise for silence that lets us sing, praise for all the ancient words our lips make new every single day, praise for the mind that means us, weather and wisdom and those hands who brush away the clouds. Symmetry everywhere. I hear it now.

21 January 2023
The Homeric, the usual habits of the day, exile, wr, disguise, impersonation of oneself, meek hallways to breakfast, listening to what’s happening to what at first you think are other people. the daily news the stone age epic. Open at your peril. Are you sure
your hands are really yours?

22 January 2023

Longaeval, recall that word? Means a long time or long lasting but how do we know? How do we measure time without those tricky fantasies called numbers that we use? Numbers dance, have personality
(go dance with a Seven and you’ll agree) but when it comes to telling time they just babble randomly one after another, as if 3 is so in love with 4 it can’t do anything but sigh its name. Longaeval? Mouse in the larder, crocodile on the Nile, your grandfather’s baton, a smear of peach jam on the lip of someone you love, lick it off gently smiling, taste—that’s what time means.
A lifetime turned left at the corner, settled on a bench beneath a kindly urban linden tree.

We call this the Interruption or the Great Prayer, solemn ceremony of Between.

Sitting there, the lifetime’s eyes at the level of the midriff of passing people, their bodies easier to read than far faces. Easier to read inquisitive dog,
patrolling cat. Pleasant city, interesting people pass. Sunny but sit in shade. What more could any lifetime ask?

22 January 2023
(pink Spaldeen bouncing down the stoop)

If you pull on it
gets longer and longer
until you can wrap it
around more and more
people, take more and more
creatures and persons
into your heart. That’s why
the heart is made of rubber,
that’s why you hear it
when love excites you,
pouncing gently in your chest
like a pink rubber ball
bounding down the steps.

22 January 2023
L’ANNEE DU LAPIN D’EAU

A pig and a monkey and a snake sat taking tea together timidly enough at table. Each talked the wy its physics permitted, hissily, oinkishly, jumping u to bring more snacks. All pleasant and not too long but sometimes I wish that none of us had ever learned Chinese.

22 January 2023
LETTER TO AN UNKNOWN

Dear X,
I dreamt about you again last night. Still don’t know who you are. Slim figure moving through a doorway. What kind of message is that what are you trying to tell me? And who are you? What must it mean to you, for you to appear in my dreams? Is it part of your job to pass through, or is it my fate (is there such a thing?) to lure you in? And if so, either way, why don’t you linger? Why don’t I reach out and compel you, beg you, ask you to stay. Or at
least say, say who you are and why you’re here, or who I am in your world, your dream, that if rubs against mine? Do dream collide, mesh together briefly then part?

You moved through the doorway, I followed you and the dream ended. I never saw your face, tell our age, only a slender casually clothed body stepping quickly in the doorway, couldn’t even tell if we, I wss following you, whether we were going out or coming in. Doors are such an ancient mystery. I’m surprised the Church still tolerates them.
I wait, of course, for your answer. Any clue would be welcome, any hint about the path that might one day lead to your identity.

Naively,

R

22 January 2023
A ROSE
caught in the chandelier. How did it get there and is it real?
Two questions close connected. A paper rose tossed from the balcony?
Strange life of the opera house, oval balconies one over another up and up, a thousand people herded into the indoor sky. We won’t walk about the music though Rossini or Donizetti can make anything happen, a rose toppled from heaven.

22 January 2023
A PRAYER

Let it walk me there
like Latin or a concerto
for bassoon or a child
running down the cliff path,
ruddy earth and paler sand,
a conversation. Let it
take me where it needs to go,
let a ct-glass punchbowl fill
serenely with the memory.
Of what? Water of course,
the thing we walk on always
between skin and bone,
the breath condensed, allow me
the liberty of touch. Walk me
as far as the light. Walk me to the end of silence. Doesn’t have to be Mozart, maple will do, or sycamore late to drop their leaves. Comparison keeps us going on the way, cerebral resemblances, oaths sworn before the linden tree. Crack open the walnut, Irishman, down on your knees to feed the fish.

22 January 2023

ASSONANCE
In the core of each word
a sameness sounds.
As if the same bell heard
in different corers of one
vast church, your hearinghead.
THE RITUAL

Of walking down the hall, looking out the window at the trees to see where the light is coming from. There, that is autobiography enough.

23 January 2023
Wintry mix evening, inch of snow now. I read fre-mail from California, sorry for myself. It will melt– I hope self does too,

23.1.23 lune link
= = = = = =

Sometimes all I want is watch the river flow back to its other, a reassurance? A remembering? Back to work, feel a bit younger.

23.I.23
1. As I read her letter she’s falling in love with his language. The man will come later.

2. Everything is a door. The rain-soaked ivy on your old brick wall leads somewhere. Window where she waits.
3. But we don’t really know what finally throws the switch and the opera begins, no orchestra needed, no stage, just beautiful turbulent music I want but I’m afraid. Curtain rises. Call her up.

4. I may just be imagining it all, I’ve been falling for language all my life, falling at its feet and praying Say me, Say me I want so much to be a word too.
5. Might as well be on a carousel stretching for the brass ring gives you a free ride. I loved to ride the lion not some horse but he was low, and my fingers couldn’t come close to the ring. But the lion was amazing, all the roundness of his shoulders, landscape close to my face of his tossed back mane. We choose our patron animals and sometimes only ride once.
6. So should I worry about this lady in love? Opera has its own protections even if there’s just a cast of two. Maybe he catches the tune, begins to hum, words come, *She looks like my native land* he sings and hurries home.

23 January 2023
ON MEAD MOUNTAIN

1.
Wear the habit of healing.
I saw a priest in Woodstock,
tall man on the mountain.
They try, they try, but the snow
keeps coming, drifting the roads
no horse has traveled in decades.

2.
*Who are we now?* The priest
is asking, he loves boys and men
but the snow keeps coming.
3.

Love is my only lesson, he cries, but am I teaching it or learning? They are the same, I said, translating from poetry.

4.

So long ago and still true. The magic meadow up Mead they called it, and once I saw a dryad there—but I was looking and attention summons actual and all the myths test true.
5.
Snow a gift to equal earth
I thought, but shivered.
We’re in this together,
this soft erasure, a priest
in snow, anybody in the woods,
start singing now, t helps
the breath keep warm.

23 January 2023
The heart as vessel
vessel as a ship,
you embark anywhere
and sail or steam
there. You know there
when you get there,
those unmistakable eyes.

2.
Or as a great urn
of terra cotta
baked from your earth
filled with the neatly folded
names of all your friends and a few crumpled pages of stories about some who never were.

24 January 2023
Don’t go there,  
the snow has said enough.  
Or what it left unsaid  
the sun makes up for now,  
its ample gospel  
hastening the light.

It seems I do not have to rise.  
But guilt is my garden  
and I face the blank page  
with spade in hand.  
I’ll dig it out of me yet.

24 January 2023
The myth of meaning
whereas in fact
the fct.

Go slow here,
the myth is gracious,
shapely as a river
and mostly continuous—
if this, then that.

But think again
or think within
or think not at all
and leave the word lone
to spin like n old record
on the gramophone, speak all it likes or sings but try to listen to it calmly from another room.

24 January 2023
Averte oculos, custode oculorum
the old priest intoned
as he struggled half-named from his sickbed,
turn away your eyes,
take good care of your eyes
the Latin meant but he
more likely meant
see what I am become,
now pity me.

24 January 2023
A CONSOLATION IN WINTER

Amber sunglasses
turn the snow
yellow, so green seems.

24.1.23, lune
Read road as river.
Runs down past the house bringing elements to pass.
Who would dare kayak up it against all gravity and sense?
Why go to some imagined place oy brings you drop by drop, gallons of geography?
I often come up with new reasons for sitting still.

24 January 2023
Words can come from anywhere, adobe from Egyptian, good red brick from Dutch and we can build with them anywhere, wider and higher and more always on the way.

24 January 2023
Living engraving
bare trees on the ridge
all the same height
all one breed

and through them all
the sky shows through.
The ridge! Earth gift,
to lift a line of rock,
pf love above the town.
The trees outnumber us.

24.1.23, Kingston
Go buy a center,
sit in it,
know where all things are.

25.1.23, lune
TRACES

1.
    What comes to us remembers. Venice lingers, like the scent of my uncle’s cigars. And is that what pets are, affectionate reminding machines? I wouldn’t know. The breeze from the Adriatic is usually enough for me.

3. That’s what I’m trying to work out, why some do and others no. Or any of them perhaps, could suddenly by some shimmer of rain or glint of music suddenly have its mummy wrappings
stripped away, and there resplendently intact alive and well, the Turkish cabdriver in Berlin.

25 January 2023]
Go to the end and start again with no beginning. The rosary of experience is continuous. Golden beads, Lapis beads, Amber beads, Amethyst, Ruby, now. You hear them singing

_Sun on snow_

_Long way to go_

and you understand something about distances, letters you forgot to answer, letters sent but no reply, Sigh.
What are they singing now?
This rabbit year seems full of fear—
turn off the television,
there are some thoughts best not to think, don’t
even try to make a list of them—
I know how you are, your will to know everything, even
things that must not be known.

26 January 2023
In the caverns of what is called the heart but ius in fact a vast transparent mountain rising from the Baltic Sea no matter where you live or where you come from, there it stands, riddled with caves full of images languages, musics, bones of the dead, passports of the not yet born. Caverns you wander through all that furlough you cll sleep
ad what you find there defines your day. Stand sometimes on the mountain top looking north to the cold serious lands, south to the busy mix, thirteen languages around one lake, look further, when you stand on the top of the heart you can see beyond the world, beyond the possible into the actual. Then rest quiet in the comfort of the caves your own, far below.

26 January 2023
Eleusis
is everywhere,
every leaf
a script of its ritual,
everything you see
the epopteia,
the showing forth
that tells the truth,
the whole truth.

26 January 2023
If the water freezes
a kind of motet
for patient doubters,
don’t go by numbered
as such but only as
cycles per second.
The note. The tone.
The timbre. Water
in the birdbath, keep
an eye on that. Water
freezing, ice melting,
what a duet. Not a motet—
don’t know where that
word came from, maybe
it melted from some other idea. But I can hear it now.

26 January 2023
Don’t you sometimes get tired or getting tired of things? Shouldn’t all things be ripe with puppy-love and hopping on your lap and burbling out the latest discoveries, ancient fortress on the moon?

Don’t you get sick of not caring, shouldn’t everything be urgent, truthful, full of wisdom’s kisses, unrelentingly interesting, leave a sweet aftertaste?
My solution for such *accedia* is to look at a tree, look and listen till its fresh fruit topples into your mind.

26 January 2023
As a kid I was terrified of leopard and lepers and snakes. Now I’m only frightened of what comes next. Hear the doorbell. Hide under the bed.
= = = = =

It could be days
or some number
or the trees
on the ridge
or be a shadow
speaking, it could
because it can
and we wait
without waiting
for the no or shake
of its regl head,
a bird flies by
is as much as we
know abut destiny.
Some of the lamas can read the sky’s palm, they smile and say nothing but help us along.

27 January 2023
Then the fox moved from his house on the hill maybe I hope just for the season, foxes have Floriadas too, but the deer still come freely, lovely to have friends you only have to feed, not sit up all night talking, who need no more words than these.

27 January 2023
In the orchards of righteousness
a stiff breeze is blowing,
leaves tremble, branches quiver,
o that keen fruit ripens so slow.

27.1.23
It doesn’t do to talk too much—no one might be listening so the words would have to wait years dimming in psycho-space till some future archeologist reads them off the air like some shattered clay tablet asleep in his own mind.

27.1.23
Blue sun sky tells me
so easy
to be neutral.

27.1.23, lune
MEMO

We are animals who need houses to live in—
that’s the first thing to remember.
And we are so slow to ripen,
millennia meandering forward.
Someday maybe no more skyscrapers.
Maybe even no more war.

27.1.23
REMEMBERING PAUL LA FARGE

It seems impossibly far from the boulevards of Paris in the stern sensuous geometry of Baron Haussmann to the dark terror-stricken alleyways of Lovecraft’s imagination scared of every foreign thing but Paul navigated distances. Paul could read the one inside the fear, inside the architecture of ordinary life, that creature inside it all, the one the Romans called *humanus*, the one who still walks on the ground,
the human who walks all those avenues bright or dark.
Paul knew human, could spot it wherever it was at work, see it and scribe it and bring it so close to us that everything he wrote about is richer thanks to his words.

27 January 2023
for Michael, his birthday

What a time to be born, just after Mozart propped open a door for you to sashay through, too tall for a single art, you had to turn music into poetry and poetry into dreamy drawings of intricate simplicity.

But words never failed you and you shaped them
into gifts for so many, so many learned to see from what you taught them to hear.
(FINDING THE OTHER)

Irrigate the obvious, the actual. Let the waters of the Other run through. Dig a channel by silence, by rapt attention, wait by the shore. All song begins with waiting in silence on the levee.

Then seeing plays a part, touches the harp-strings. See by closing the eyes and let the Other come towards you, at its own pace, over the dark sea. Guide books abound, poems and myths and movies, but are not really needed. The Other comes of its own will.

Her own will, I’d say, but that’s me, the torsion—or is it distortion?—of my own vision, to see the Other as Herself,
at peace or in severity, setting the rhythm of the world. I must be humble here, the wise humility called uncertainty, uncertainties. Make no claims, whisper what happened, or what I think happened.

We learn the Other by what it summons in us, how it makes us behave to one another, because one another is the closest we come to An Other in ordinary life. Before you close your eyes and rest vigilant by the channel..

Other: To Her! is what it spells to make clear, or O He! or O The—and it’s up to us to find the name to follow the dash. Alive with possibilities, liberties, the water rushes towards you, to
answer your thirst, reward your reverence. Reverence is the tribute we pay to that power, and everything we make or write or say or sing turns out to be prayer.

28 January 2023
Sky was his neighbor,  
that kind of town,  
settlement by a stream,  
no houses nearby yet.  
Yet a man can live there,  
I mean the mind can  
and what else matters  
sometimes? But  
only sometimes.  
A river means  
wait a while  
just where you are.

28 January 2023
WIN BY LOSING

Now what was the word
I just intended to write?

Not a place name although
I love to say them over
and over to myself, Adriatic,
Tanganyika, Rappahannock,
Peru. O the shifting accents
of geography! Stop it, the word
I want is not an island
or a bumbling metropolis,
it is a word I had in mind
but then picked up my cup
of cool coffee and distracted myself with its welcome taste.

And I wasn’t even thirsty, just the usual morning mouth, the infant greed. *Word, word I lack* sang Moses in Schönberg’s unfinished opera, haunts me since I heard it, but my word wasn’t something I was begging from the mountain or the sky, just a word hanging around in my head. Hanging around! What an insolent, blasphemous way of talking about a word, any word, hiding in the woods
or swept inadvertently beneath the richly patterned Persian rug of my inattention. Maybe if I look at a tree I’ll remember.

[A note on Schönberg’s *Moses and Aaron*. In the German text, Moses sings “Wort, Wort das fehlt mir!” Literally, word, word that is missing from me—the word is the subject of the verb, and the verb means to be lacking—our word ‘fail’ says that too. But in English we translate Moses’s great cry as “Word, Word that I lack”—the verb puts the blame on us—it’s my failing, I lack the word. We ask ourselves Blame the
word or blame yourself—which kind of Moses are you?]

28 January 2023
Sedan. A place.
A battle. A car
you drive around in
though you don’t
call it that much
anymore.
What else is old?

28.1.23
Walk there
said William,
Jerusalem
is never far.
I nod my head
almost a bow,
I’ll get there yet
shouting my
silence aloud.

29 Januar 2023
What would a Christian country or a Buddhist country mean? The poor are housed and fed. And no more war.

29.I.23
HOMOPHONES, 1

The sermon for today: allowed, aloud.
That we are permitted to speak out loud what the mind means or the mind hears.

29.1.23
HOMOPHONES, 2

See the sea,
our teacher
from the beginning.
Open your eyes
and count the waves
until you close them
gently and just know.

29.1.23
HOMOPHONES, 3

Tire, tire,
don’t you get tired
of rolling around?
Wouldn’t it be nicer
to rest unturning,
but still bearing up
the weight of your machine?

29,1.23
HOMOPHONES, 4

When you turn left
you take for your own
what the wise men of old
have left of their wisdom.
Inherit the mind!

29.1.23
Sunday morning
time to be a church
or try to. Start
by letting everybody in,
rare birds of winter,
last night’s dreams,
reminiscences of friends
and what they said
or still say. Say Mass
by pure listening.
The sermon is long done—
now bring forth the bread.

29 January 2023
MONDAY TO FRIDAY

yellow busses carry reluctant kids to school
All week long up here
white busses fetch happy enough college students from rooms
off-campus back in style to the crowded campus.
Classes and chapels and labs and even libraries.
You can never be sure what a white bus will do.

29.I.23
Girls never whistled when I was a kid and now hardly anybody does. Gone are the mini-motets on sidewalks and schoolyards, no more poor lonely foreigner rolling a rack through the old garment district. Maybe there’s some wisdom here or even growth. Listen more and make music less. Hmmm. Passives rolling over, dozing under their fluffy cellphones?

29.I.23
= = = = = =

Backing out
into what came before time
the man moves his mind.

So much to be discovered there,
does gravity persist, or pre-exist
all things that fall?
Who will I be. he wonders,
when I am before?
And who will be there
to meet me, or hold my hand?

30 January 2023
Waif of the calf’s barn
I wanted pure cow,  
weighty, mothery, productive.  
But I was stuck so long  
among the kiddie mumblers  
just learning to moo.

And what can that teach  
a human mute? Wait,  
wait, thy word will come–

I heard that consolation  
as their meek hooves  
scratched the old wood floor..
Wait, wait—it’s what all writers hear before they finally get to hear Alph’s sacred waters flow.

30 January 2023

[With gratitude to Coleridge, whose poem woke me, and told me what I was supposed to do.]
Onion-peeling by mind alone.

The trees look on, seem to smile, wondering how I’ll make out at what they do so well. Peeling away and peeling away until there’s nothing left but what is real.

30 January 2023
I think I am made
of the kind of rock
Herkimer diamonds come from,
angular, jagged, but no
straight lines, hard
and hard to strand steady,
I wobble on the diamond tips.

2.
Exaltation isn’t easy.
When the work gets hard
I float away on a cloud.
If you wonder how stone
or anything like it can drift in midair, over cities you never heard of, over herds of non-0existent cattle, jst remember Vapor, Vapor is breath, Breath conquers all.

30 January 2023
CHAIRS

Chair-backs sculptural, floral patterned too jagged to be comfortable, seats smooth enough but too low to sit and get up easy from. Two of these.

2.
What am I to make of the republic where such things are made, of my own house furnished with such things.
What else are we doing wrong in the *unknown interior of America* we call the dream?

31 January 2023
If I speak Classical Latin and have blue eyes will they still call me a Latino? The child wonders, ponders, gets dressed, goes out, walks down the street, enters the bodega, speaks politely *Panem album mihi da*, *et Cocam-Colam*. And waits.
What snow brings lingers later even when the white is gone
It does something to the earth that even rain does not but I don’t know what.
I infer this from seeing two meadows a furlong apart the other day, one a solid mile of green its neighbor white. Something the soil does or needs or declines to absorb. Something the snow says I wish I knew how to hear.

31 January 2023
When a fire runs out of air it goes to sleep. Principle of the candle snuffer the long brass rod with a tiny cup swivelling at its end the altar boy snuffs out the altar candles with when Mass is done. Everything needs a time to sleep.

31 January 2023
A finger focused on the moon will lead you somewhere, a song at very least, or a bush with a rabbit hiding in it. Watch the moonlight gleaming on your fingernail. The world is closer than you think.
THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

Imagine a question to which you cannot imagine any answer right or wrong.

31.I.23
SUNGLASSES

The snow seems kinder now that all the blue has gone home.

31.1.23, *lune*
The Hudson at Rhinecliff, to go there at evening, watch the broad stretches across and north and south is to be calmed, consoled, mothered a little by what we see, a river flowing two ways at once and not moving at all resting before us perfectly still. It could be a lake but then two seagulls fly past.

31 January 2023
I’d swear that bare tulip tree
is taller today than before.
Or heaven came down a few feet
overnight. Welcome home!

31 January 2023
Saturn in Pisces
slow of gait,
in the second house,
wok for a living.
Venus straight
across the pond,
slow love lingers.

31.I.23
Quarrels of querulous queens quickly quelled by one question—
who is the quietest of you all?

31.I.23