

1-2023

**Jan2023**

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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 for a 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 hardly 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 road'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 the glee of a mild day  
on earth, after a mile  
she stops and from  
a well only she knows  
draws a 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  
and the night just a daydream?  
Look at the wet grass  
and try to remember.**

**3 January 2023**

=====

**When I say I  
I mean you  
and when I say you  
I mean un utterly  
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 of the bread you cut off. 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 touched 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 feet 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 messsages 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, please, 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 seting  
and who am I now?  
Am I changed? Then I woke.  
The ritual was gone.  
But the questions lingered.**

**5 January2023**

=====

**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.**

**5.1.23**

## **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 Cochection  
stare sadly at the Delaware.**

**5 January 2023**

=====

**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 preferengce  
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**

**EPENTHETIC**

**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 January2023**

=====

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,  
ypu 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.**

**9 January 2023**

**= = = = =**

**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.**

**9.1.23**

**=====**

**A book, a bowling ball,  
a postcard from Tangiers.  
You work it out—  
I'm tired 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  
fto 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/open,  
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,  
t 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 *Cetral Park?* Or *Carousel?*  
Some 29th Century story,  
happy endings all round  
but not for me, I mean that me,  
fugitive, safe in Spain, died.  
Ir 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 up the wave it made,  
carry a ewer of it home to distill.  
And soon you had the elixir  
called Bringing News from  
Somewhere 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 what he too will soon become.**

**10 January 2023**

=====

**The sky's lightening,  
she's coming!  
Now it's up to us.**

**10.I.23, *lune***

**= = = = =**

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

**10.I.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 the 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 no sound.  
No arguing with silence.**

**5.**

**Then he drew out from the dark**

a tattered opusculum  
from the Renaissance  
when they still worried  
about the soul, before  
reason swirled her skirts  
and lured them away,  
he handed it to me,  
couldn'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. Not 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  
decided when they built a bridge  
a mile away. They carried  
him over when he died.  
He was postman of Barrytown,  
through his 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 last 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.  
e see what we hear  
even whe 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,  
yourmind, your love.  
Emotional intensity  
is all we really have**

**to work with in this  
Aoine wilderness  
of ordinary life.  
Your hand, for instance,  
your fingers warm.**

**12 January 2023**

=====

**The weather didn't listen  
to the wether report.  
It snowed anyhow, still at it,  
despite the clement prophecies  
of those plausible blondes  
we ee on TV with graphs,  
maps swimming behind them.  
Snow. Or *snaw*, as the Irish  
sy 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.I.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 January2023**

**= = = = =**

**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  
nd 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.**

**12.1.23, *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 said 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 anoier!  
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.I.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 pf 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, angrls should be naked,  
the wy the world is when we fly.**

**15 Januaty 2023**

**=====**

**Ripe avocado  
palpable,  
a rugged green heart.**

**15.I.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**

=====

*for K.L.*

**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 I 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.**

**18 January 2023**

=====

**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,  
sll 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  
jasmynes 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 Cavailon.**

**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 aohter 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**

## **AMATEUR NGHT IB HEAVEN**

**Here, hold this baton,  
try to guide for a few moments  
the destiny of humankind.  
No, leave the tigers alone,,  
and thre leprechauns. Just  
people, stay with people,  
show them what todo. See,  
it's not so easy. Maybe  
next time you bitch about fate  
you'll remember this feeble  
stick in your frightened fingers.**

**20 January 2023**

**= = = = =**

**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 2023**

**=**

**=====**

**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 thigh, harp strings 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.**

**11.**

**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 her 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.

**22 January 2023**

=====

**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 was 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  
rinning 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 corners 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.I.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.**

**23.1.23**

**=====**

**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 MMOUNTAIN

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.I.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.

**2.**

**Bolzano. Concert hall,  
no audience. A piano  
competition on stage.  
A chord from the young  
man's left hand lingers.**

**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 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, you will  
to know everything, even  
things that must not be known.

**26 January 2023**

== ==

**In the caverns  
of what is called the heart  
but it is 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 will 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.**

**26,1.23**

=====

**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 rely 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.**

**29.1.23**

## **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 youc close them  
gently and just know.**

**29.I.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.I.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?**

***29.1.23***

**= = = = =**

**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, motherly, productive.  
But I was stuck so long  
among the kiddie numblers  
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**

## DRUZY

*for B.C.*

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-existent 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.**

**31 January 2023**

=====

**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 Itar boy snuffs out the altar  
candles with when Mass is done.  
Everything needs a time to sleep.**

**31 Jnuary 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 thn you think.**

**31 January 2023**

## **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 hs gone home.**

**31.I.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,  
work 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**



