

10-2024

October 2023

Robert Kelly

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=====

**Hand the waitress
your credit card—**

**there is something priestly
on this transaction,
one more mystery of money.**

**Watch her walk away,
forget about it, but soon
she comes back with it
and a piece of paper
for you to sign. Or like that.**

Nothing happens all at once,

**everything comes in pieces
we strive to hold together.
Card in wallet, waitress gone,
coffee still warm in the cup.**

1 October 2023

== == == == ==

**Sunny Sunday
after a week of not.
Brooklyn flooded
and even up here
the sump pump worked
late into the night.
Sun now, true green again,
light lives in things.**

1,X,23

== == == == ==

**Rabbit rabbit
we say in Kentucky
first day od a month,
no pause between,
no comma. But why
him, and wbt two of him?
You'd expect a different
beast for each month.
But nobody smiles and
shouts Porcupine porcupine,
just our dear olf rabbit.
He probably understands why.**

1.X.23

=====

I feel my chin.
Bristly. Medieval
maybe, or maybe
it's just morning.
The body hasn't kept
pace with history,
I could still wear
Charlemagne's undershirt.
Shaving notoriously
works only for a day,
then the old campaign
has to begin again.
When will I have wings?

**When will we float
effortless on internet
to chat with friends in Bucharest
or smoke reasonably
priced cigarettes in Istanbul?
And Waikiki only a wish away!**

1.X.23

== == == == ==

**It's not what I meant
byt what happened.
Pink blossoms
on the Japanese quince,
Months ago. And now
the euonymus turns red,
begins to. Dead leaves
from somewhere litter
the garage, but everything
still looks green.**

1.X.23

= = = =

**It stood a whale
by the weathered cross
then went and stood
among the trees.
Wherever it stood
it was waiting for me.**

2.

**These things happen in France
but here too, in the willows
along the river.
What can they do
but wait for me,
what can I do but attend?**

3.

**Deep mystery of things seen
and seeing them, they wait
to make me who I am, or I
saunter by to give meaning
to their long vigilance. Or none
of this, and the river just goes.
Flowing is knowing.**

2 October 2023

== == == == ==

**More sycamore
than ever,
fewer pheasants
than before.
This is all time means.**

2.X.23

== == == == ==

**Talking to myself
is really scraping the barrel
but sometimes even I
can understand
what I am saying.
Language is the gift
of the other sometimes
I don't want to give it back.**

2.X.23

=====

**In a yacht off Portofino
blonde college kids
run up and down. \Not far away
in genoa safe in the old synagogue
men sat
and each of them
were thinning this
is all Columbus's fault
but nobody said so outloud.**

2.X.23

= = = = =

**If these lines escaped
from their e closure
and scattered all over the park,
the page, fear
would grow, readers
look over their shoulders,
shat meaning could be
growing down there,
what might be stalking me
half out of sight
as I read this?**

3.X.23

== == == == ==

**Embers talking,
blue flame tips telling—
heat is our habit.
goldgreen the trees,
time's spoilsport crayons
changing how we feel.
Who gives time
the right to happen,
isn't space our true queen
and her consort only seems?
But seeming says us.**

3 October 2023

O CALLICOON

**my childhood Old West,
saloon with swinging doors,
the train ran right down
the only street, and there
the freight trains paused—
there's a picture of youg men
standing on a boxcar,
DL&W was it or O&W,
no one to tell me now
or where the train took me
up the Delaware somehow
to this Eastern now.**

3 October 2023

=====

1.

**Marble matters,
manners.**

**Touch the statue
to let it speak.**

2.

**Museums foil this
with ther plinths
and pedestals as if
they've heard it all
before, and want
the stone and bronze**

**infants in their care
to leave that vast
expensive silence alone.**

**3.
Sometimes though
you can reach out and touch
the emperor's toe
or even the heel of the goddess
and then your mind
fills instanter with
the complex dogmas
time tells the truth with.**

4.

They speak.

That's all you have to know.

Shuffle along the floor

from statue to statue,

listening, touching

reverent as an acolyte

the shaped substance

time left for you.

4 October 2023

= = = = =

**74 degrees at noon
not bad for October,
we smile out the sunshine
and feel thankful.**

**Now follow the gratitude
and see where it goes.**

**And where it wants
to lead me now.**

4.X.23

=====

**I am the Internet
master of slaves.
I do most of your
work for you and
take all your time away.**

4.X.23

=====

**I woke up thinking
about King George,
sixth of his name,
gentle nervous stammerer,
father of Elizabeth,
reigned till my teens.**

**Strange thing
to outlive a king—
they should be permanent,
not like dodgy presidents
dashing in and out.
And now I managed
to outlive the Queen,**

**his daughter. New king,
same old me. What does
it mean? Who rules us anyway**

?

4 October 2023

== == == == ==

**I dreamt of a bookstore
full only of dull books,
you can look things up in them
but they don't bite back**

**no tales of romance
and tragedy and such
to haunt you with.**

**The worst they can do
is give you some information
you weren't looking for
and scarcely understand,
acreage devoted to rice**

**cultivation in Bhutan
or the number of pianos
Franz Liszt had transported
with him when he went
to play for the sultan in Istanbul.**

4.X.23

=====

**A word that doesn't
come to mind,
squirrel with walnut
beside the fallen tree.
shield bug on the elbow
tickles but no harm,
spot of blood on the tissue
but where from?
These are our instruments,
the too small to be ignored,
messages from the Logos.
Fold yur thoughts in prayer.**

5 October 2023

=====

**She wants to give
things away
but away is very far.
You can't just leave
a faux-fur on the sidewalk,
and an armchair won't just
waddle out of sight all by itself.
No, away needs agency.
Away needs brawn.
I'm weak enough to
leave everything alone.**

5.X.23

== == == == ==

**Write it down
until it comes to be.
Anxiety turns amber,
mother of electricity.
Word it, word it,
new meaning
lasts into the world.**

5.X.23

== == == == ==

**The trees
in their leaves
and me in these.**

5.X.23

=====

**Wandering near the gate
but never entering.
There is a kind of music
that does that—
you leave the concert hall
with your worries still intact.**

5.X.23

= = = = =

**Will there be a place
to begin
or is it all
about ending?**

**Study the calendar and doubt,
study the clock though
and be comforted by its
everlasting here I am again.**

5.X.23

= = = ==

**Type. Tell.
A hill
on your way,
On top, stop.
Survey
the tiny buildings
of far away
where you're going.
Will you ever
fit inside them?
Why not stay
here in heaven?**

6 October 2023

AFTER THAT REVOLUTION

**we started to notice things,
Grecian urns and lime-trees.
and began to make them
all by ourselves in Manchester,
Worcester, Detroit, no end
in sight to our love of things.
The the internet came home
and lived with us, slowly, slowly
things fell away and left us
with images alone. Time
does that too, we call it memory.
And now we buy fresh memories all
day long on glowing screens.**

6 October 2023

=====

**Autumn in the trees
spells danger to life
where the hunters sneak
eager to kill. Why?
Why is it criminal
to smoke a cigarette in a cafe
but legal to murder a deer?
We writhe in strange laws.**

6.X.23

SANCTIMONIOUS

1.

**Sorry, I'm sanctimonious
today, blaming everything
but mostly meaning me.**

**To be sanctimonius and guilty
and egotistical all at once—
could I be an epic poet
trashing one more Iliad?**

2.

**Get the music started,
that'll change my life,
I mean the weather,**

**the weaver, the wandering
mind stumbling in marshes
of its own making. Maybe.**

3.

**But the tune, the tune
will lead us out of the morass,
a tune says
one thing at a time
and gives a chance
to take it in
and taste it,
quick, before the next
note comes.**

4.

**Put a slip of paper
in your mouth a moment,
now understand how far
literature is from life.
And your job's to drag
them closer together,
word by word until
your mouth is fresh again.**

5.

**I'm still telling you
wat do do.
Does it help to know
I'm really**

**talking to myself?
Or does it make it worse,
borrowing your name,
an inappropriate touch?**

6.

**Latin *mos, moris*,
meant what people do.
Customs. So morality
should have room in it
for you and me. I mean
the real you this time,
the glorious not-me
who can see what no
I can ever see.**

7.

If I stop telling myself

what to do

maybe I'll do it.

Then again,

if all the liars are gone

who will tell the truth?

6 October 2023

EPHESIAN

1.

**The stone sounds old
tough to the touch
and remember.**

**A woman walks
through Eohesus
and I believe what she sees.
Can hardly understand
what she's saying,
television, but the stone
speaks clearer.**

2.

**It is about the virginity
of agency, how what does
can go on doing,
decently and all that it begets
makes the Goddess Virgin.
Artemis. Diana. Maria.**

3.

**What the stone knows.
It can take every shape
and still be in its own self.
And once in Oregon
(another dactyl, another
Ephesus) I gouged
a little mudstone from the wall**

**with my fingernail—
for weeks down in California
my hands were pregnant
with its message.
Old rock, biggest book.**

**4.
Because it makes
to think.
What else
is thee really
todo? Don't
waste electricity
on remembering.**

5.

**We watched the tide
come in today, rippling
firmly up the river
we by by its lyric lulled.
The river marrying the sea,
two virgins interweaving.**

6 October 2023

== == == == ==

**The trouble with comic books
the story never
lived up to the pictures.**

**Here is a man who can fly—
what would you do
if you were he?**

See what I mean?

6.X.23

== == == == ==

Things often vanish
when you look
the other way,
But what way is that?
Is there something seen
untethered from our seeing?
The other side of the rose,
the scent of knowing?

2.

Trees this time of year
contemplate their own away,
how to be gone
without moving an inch,

**wide-awake and thinking.
Steiner told us trees
sleep in summer all in green,
but I say maybe but
they talk in their sleep.**

**3.
So it;s the word again,
the always-away
that is right here.
I say Ocean you say Sea
go down to the river
and hear what the seagulls say.**

4.

**When lying half
awake in bed
first light, away
is near but here
is far. Roll over
try desperately
to be where I am.**

5.

**Random religions
shake the mattress,
Everything is true
the mirror says
but what about you.**

**Back to bed, say
some silence that
feels like prayer.**

6.

**And then it's now,
all the prepositions
fumble at the gate
till you don't know
where anything is
except away. Awake,
arise, be someone else
at last, the named personage
who went to bed
could that be who**

**you ever are?
Enough, enough
for one grey day—
near is further than ever now.**

7 October 2023

= = = = =

**Born in an oasis
like everyone else
I grew to admire
the turbulence outside
until one day I recalled
the peace inside.
Since then I've been
a desert dweller too.**

7.X.23

NOW

sink

**into the deep
recesses of now.**

**Float there
slowly knowing
nothing but now.**

**Now you will know
what any stone
knows, but soon
you will forget.**

**Then you will have to
come to now again,
right now, the only
where there is.**

7.X.23

== == == == ==

**Sunlight
roiling over
quietly wavelets,
the teeth of light
gnashig slowly
through water,'
slowly, slowly,
the way it says.**

2.

**"Tis Sunday
after all,
sleep**

till a poem
wakes thee,
duty
is made of light
and saying so.

3.

Stad alone
in a field.
What more
can anyone do?

4.

Or let the waves
answer for you,
you saw them

clear enough arriving
pushing upriver
on the evening tide
in gentlest contradiction.

5.
it takes a real hero
to stand up against
all his selves
just by himself.
O mocking bird
priest of the flock!

6.
Waking was dry
throat, hallways

**full of sun. L~eaves
still green. Every
moment a manifesto.**

7.

**Try to get there from here.
First chage rivers, head west.
You spend summer there
several forevers ago so why
should it elude you now?
Golden swine on the Damascus
road, black pines of Callicoon.**

8.

But then the sky said

Don't be so specific,

leave that to me.

I looked up and three

cars went up the hill

trailing a slow white bus.

I got the point, apoogized.

Time is nothing to play with.

9.

Still, it all sounds

like a hymn, doesn't it.

**Church is never far away,
empty these days
but the stone still
knows how to sing.**

8 October 2023

=====

**Give empathy
a chance to breathe—
it's hard when the news
so-called come swiveling in
and we get shouted at
and shelled with images
but it has to rest, somewhere
inside, there, you know the place
you saw it the first time
you ever saw your mother cry.**

8.X.23

KHORLO

**Chalk holy words
on the walls of your tires
so every mile
you'll drive a million prayers.
Isn't that really
what the wheel is for?**

8.X.23

KINDERSZENEN

So many newspapers
on the candy store stand
I watched as I licked my cone,
Blake Avenue, edge
of the city, the ones
I liked were the ones
I couldn't read,
and the best began HOB0–
it took years to learn
it was Russian for *New*.

8.X.23

== ==

**Do I have to know
where I have been?
It's all further away
than India. What never
has been is still
closer than what was.
Yet when I close my eyes
I still see Everest.**

8.X.23

= = = = =

**No people left
the walls are made of paper
tear them down
and there's nothing out there beyond
the script
you threw away**

**but with that has to be
another way
there has to be a door
that opens out
into crowded room,**

people talking deeply, knowing,
looking at you —
but this is now after all,
sit back quietly on the sofa
with no cat sleeping, no newspaper
lies to read.
no one is near but far away
if you listen hard you can hear voices
only voices,
not what they say.

8 October 2023

HIDE & SEEK

**Anybody By My Base Is IT
we used to chant
closed eyes while all
the other [layers scattered.
That's how we learned
to wake alone, everything
and everyone still to be found.
touched, brought home
to do their share at last.**

9 October 2023

== == == == ==

**How can you tell
me from a stranger?
Indigenous Peoples
Day, I think I was born
before the island
so what does that make me?
Genetics is a stern religion
but a religion is all it is.**

9.X.23

== == == == ==

Silver water
tumbler of time.
glass of seltzer
at the drug store.
Quick hissing
in the lips, wonder
if war will ever end.

9.X.23

== == == == ==

how many tulips
make a train?
Where is it going
this time of year?
I dreamt I had more
portals than I knew,
are there also special
flowers in October?
Who pays the rent
for hummingbirds,
and where? We do
know why, at least,
we've seen the eagles
drinking the nectar

**at the top of the sky.
We watched from the shore
and a train slipped by fast
and silvery and strangely
quiet as if it were just one
current on our tidal river.
Otherwise no flowers.**

9 October 2023

=====

**Specify an arch,
Romans good at it,
almost show-off
but something more.
A gateway into
what was not there
before. Go through
and you're in a new
place altogether,
even if it;s the same old
meadow or plaza or.
Going through an arch
like any door is going
somewhere else and those**

**hawk-nosed emperors
knew it. You can never
get bored when you're near
an arch, and boredom
is the root of revolution.
We can all be happy children
running in and out of now.**

9 October 2023

== == == == ==

**Roughly now.
Vaguely here.
All I am
is for you.**

9.X.23

[DOZENS]

**When the
wind blows
who am
I or
anyone
at all?**

**It brings
me fast
cold air,
my breath
it takes
away.**

9.X.23

=====

**Because the block was long
we never got to know
people at the other end.
Felt like a diffeeng world
down there, before
all the vacant lots.**

2.

**But around the corner
was a different matter,
the only other Irishers,
all girls until the last
late pregnancy made
little Joseph startle us.**

3.

**How easily city people
get shocked or scared—
something pastoral about
the subway skews our level
of anxiety somehow so
anything quiet frightens us,
we feel safe in the noisy
rapid forest underground.**

4.

**Or is it jungle now
and full of fear?
I haven't been on the A train
in ten years.**

5.

**Go back to the vacant lots
o please, the empty walk
to church, all gone now,
projects and warehouses
and who am I to miss
what I left before it left me?**

6.

**Hence the absurdity of nostalgia.
There is a meadow somewhere,
church bell bonging the horizon
or is it saying Come to school,
come to school, your time**

**is not your own. The bell.
The long blocks between
sleep and waking.
And even here the grass is green.**

10 October 2023

== == == == ==

**Mix the rice wine
with the vinegar
they'll never know
the difference.
But who are they?
And who are you?**

10.X.23

== == == == ==

**There was a mailbox
on a post
but no house in sight,
an old tin arch of a box
maybe a driveway
it belonged to
now lost in trees,
no name on the box,
no red flag shown.
Yet there it is, intact,
ready to yield its messages
if anyone dares to open it.**

11.X.23

=====

**If we hadn't been so tired
and hadn't caught this cold
we could have dined on
fried cod in New Bedford
and be eating clam cakes
on Cuttyhunk. Other pleasures
beckon, but hunger wins out
and breakfast is two hours away.**

11.X.23

WASPS

**We sting
but make no honey.
Imagine a country
run by us.**

11.X.23

== == == == ==

**Where do we hide
the future?
Inside the body
where it curls
and sleeps and tries
to wake until we
weaken enough to set it free.
It's all in us, partner,
shake it out or leave it be,
time will help it decide.
I just have to remember
it's all my fault.**

11.X.23

== == == == == ==

**Close to being able to be,
the light in the window
reminds me again and again
I'm not here yet, I'm not the one
it needs to rouse. Soon, soon
it sings, my breath tries hard
to sing that tune, says a word
and finally I'm on the way.**

11 October 2023

=====

I dreamed I ate an apple,
had neatly peeled it
the way we used to do
and here I stood with a white
wet chewy lump in my hand
nervous as childhood, so easy
to remember Eden, all we lost
by eating anything at all.

11,X,23

== == == == ==

**I want the river in me,
I think I want to be geology,
sandstone cliffs on the Hudson,
ground beneath me
that lets me, makes me, be.
I want to study what the earth
does to me, makes of me,
how each place so deeply
subtly defines the one who live
in this place we all call 'here.'
I want to know what stone knows
—is that a folk song
enough to sing?**

11 October 2023

== == == == ==

**Wilson waited
for the war
and even so
a million died.
O go on waiting,
governments,
just for once
in human history
see what happens
if no one kills.**

12.X.23

== == == == ==

**Experts tease
novices who
in their turn
snub outsiders.
as if Truth itself
were nothing more
than being on top
in any conversation.**

12,X,23

LIEBESLIED LIEBESLEID

Suppose I were the sky—
you'd hide inside.

And if I were the ground
you'd fly away. Love

is so difficult. Maybe
if I were water

you'd take a little sip
or dip a finger in to test
the warmth of my

sincerity. Hmm.

If I try to be air.

Will anybody be there?

12.X.23

TABLEWARE

Ramekin

full of heavy cream,

dove feather,

yes. But who

am I fooling?

Who opened the window,

who let the light in?

2.

A table mostly tells the truth.

You know right sway

when you come into a house

what kind of souls

**dwell there day by day,
study the table, orderly,
messy, empty, charged,
it spreads wide before you
like Moses's tablets. Watch
and be cautious. Now
study the chairs.**

**3.
Importune the day
yo open the door
of a really new room.
You don't have to go it,
you can breathe it,
spell it, know it**

from the threshold.

**A day can do that
if you let it.**

4.

**The dove was on the deck
and left it.**

**You plan to soak
something in the cream
but the song keeps changing
Even when you shut ff
radio and internet
the changes still ring out
even if you use
a telescope to read your mail.**

5.

**Intentions, they jingle
like coins in your pocket
when there still were coins,
intentions like coins too,
still there but a little old
around the edges.**

**We use something swifter
to get through the day,
not what we intended
but what comes easier—
we say for it all a month
later, on a piece of paper
and nobody will ever know
what you really meant to do.**

12.X.23

== == == == == == ==

**But who is there
waiting by the wide white steps
standing on the first step
looking at us? The dome
is huge behind them,
the sea beyond us.**

2.

**Or who are we
when we are there?
Lost in a sea of pronouns
the lovers test for identity
one tongue tip at a time.**

**Back in the hotel,
the bed ungenerous,
gulls still close outside.**

3.

**Travelers are like that,
They stood by the church
wondering about the figure
on the steps, the Adriatic
busy around them all.
They never thought to enter
the church. Why should they?
Too early in the day for art.**

4.

Travel does that.

**After all the joyous confusions
some places stay in mind.**

**So there. So there that
you could be there still.**

5.

**I dreamt I said my prayers
and there suddenly appeared
in huge Hebrew letters**

the Arabic word for night.

**And it was day. Ss if we were
one person after all.**

6.

**Then who is the other,
the one on the steps
of Santa Maria Maggiore
so long ago? Why didn't we
climb the steps, that's one
thing stone is good for
even if you forget to listen.**

7.

**Maybe it's not too late,
two, three, steps up,
the figure is gone, I watch
the sea, boats and islands**

**moving and still. What
does a traveler expect?
Don't ask too much of a dream.**

13 October 2023

== == == == ==

**Left hand grips right hand
there is a conversation going on
muscles and bone, bone
and not muchh flesh, skin
pulled taut over knuckles, why,
we say I wring my hands
bht they do it all by themselves
talking telling I watch
listen try to learn.**

13.X.23

== == == ==

1.

**The other way
the out to sea
where everything
dissolves into
a single memory.
No more nostalgia.
No more names.**

2.

**It thought that way
this morning
by a mild rain.**

**Weather silences
remembering,
don't forget.**

**3.
O to be only now
the boy prayed
fearing quiet noises
in his parents room.**

**4.
Mingyur Rinpoche
speaks of the sky
beyond all weather,
always there no matter what.
We have that sky too**

he says, know It to find it.
He comes from the mountains—
I wonder if we of the coasts
have our own sea.

5.
Analyzed otherwise,
photo of a peony
close-up, seems
big as a pumpkin
or full moon in trees.
You sent me the image
on the day of an eclipse
to heal the suddenly unseen.

6.

**Bringing time back
into the story. His parents
are stirring, soon
they will exile him
another day in school.**

**Yet how sweet the soft light is,
how he wishes he could stay
with it, learn from it alone,
in quiet, far from the surly
stampede of books and rules.**

Is it OK to pray to the light?

**He hears the wall clock snickering at
him.**

7.

**But time unmeasured
may yet let him triumph
someday, nothing to be done
except the sky. Or sea.**

14 October 2023

== == == == ==

**Big bird flew by,
hawk or crow
too fast to know,
beautiful enough
to make me tell.**

14.X.23

== == == == ==

**Still in Libra
still in doubt.
Roll the stones
out of the fern brake,
see if they will form
a figure you can name—
your breath will come
easier then, your pulse
slow. A circle, square,
star, triangle, anything
that has a name and you
know the name. Ferns
slumber into autumn,
the stones hold shape,**

**the shape you gave them
Omigod it's all your fault—
that's what Libra means.**

14.X.23

== == == == ==

**Sun in haze–
whose fault is that?
Dwell in doubt.
(It must be me.)**

14.X.23

=====

**Edward Estlin
Cummings born
this day, a pink-
faced Yankee
who taught
us to be brief,
funny, intimate
and right, very right,
In a crowded classroom
his smiling calm.**

14.X.23

== == == == ==

**Sometimes the ghosts
in the trees are the trees
themselves, *Geister*, spirits
that move without moving,
speak without suns. Or make
sounds to music what they say,**

**trees are nouns who can verb,
colors you can hear. Other days
there are other ghosts, women
and men and deeds, and all
they've done shimmers in mist.**

**we can all tell the difference—
our kind of ghost will
make us very afraid.**

14 October 2023

=====

**Assembly on the lawn,
nature's protest,
whatever things may say
their shadows
point the other way,
o ruly Sun! A tree
is an everlasting dialogue.**

15.X.23

=====

The bones in my hand
remind me of the bones I am,
gently, a little spookily,
so many of them to make me.,
I ride a coach of calcium
al/ong road it knows
while I sit watching my hands.

15 October 2023

=====

**Virgil's birthday
today, P.V.Maro
of Mantua. why
did Dante, Durante
Alighieri of Firenze,
choose him and not
Ovid, the lover?
He was afraid
so much love would
make him pause,
sink in, lose the way.
Virgil knew how
to love and still
get his hero there**

**this whole world
of queens and kings
just a vast Carthage
along the way to home.**

15.X.23

== == == == ==

**Suddenly a blue sky
and the trees begin to glow.
That's all I let myself know.
Sink down into that sky,
listen to the golden green.
Im really here now, really
part of the weather.**

**People make the mistake of thinking you have to fly
up into the sky. Not so. The sky is all around the earth—
rest, sink into its endless clarity, study peace.**

15.X.23

== == == == ==

**Maybe everybody really
is an octopus, sashaying
through the streets
with four invisible tentacles,
reaching out and touching
this and that, looping close
or flipping aside, maybe we all
walk through the meshes
of our perception, touching,
trying to know, trying to tell.**

15 October 2023

= = = = =

**Skyline—
the script a city
uses to sign its name.**

15.X.23

VIRGIN GARDEN

**Virgin garden
everything inside it
to be itself to make itself
to do itself the way the world
does itself when we
leave it alone.**

2.

**I wonder how long we have to wait to
find what grows by itself. what does
growing mean, what is itself? is there
anything we see that is not changed
by our seeing?**

3.

**The over the wall
we come and lucking,
saying names, saying
this is a flower
I could sleep beside you
or bring you to my love
or just go home alone
leave you stripped of your name.**

4.

**we lose the wall
but the place itself
fights to hold its own.
The ground holds**

**what it has known
the way a bird, a crow say,
a crow owns everything it sees.**

14-15 October 2023

= = = = =

I'm thinking in you
the letter began—
should you keep reading?

2.

How far for God's sake
can the mind reach,
the tentacles of human thought?

Or are they human?
Are they maybe reaching
from a time before us,
and we are there agents,
their animals?

3.

**You and hey and we
are they all the same,
facets of a distant I
that makes me think I'm me?**

4.

**I think the prepositions
carry some of the truth,
of you and in you and by you
to you from me and you in me
but even so I'll never be sure.**

5.

**So read the letter,
it probably comes from home,
wherever that is.**

**Maybe if you read it
you'll find out and tell me.**

16 October 2023

=====

**Why do they call it
pension?
Can you think
better in Florida
or in an easy chair?**

16.X.23

== == == == ==

**Sky blue again,
paler but true.
Trees darker though,
a different song.**

16.X.23

== == == == ==

It was a word I knew
but then forgot.
It began with a letter
home from camp
when I was ten—
there was a river
outside the cabin
and a snake, a rock,
big boys with
swaggering genitals.
A word like weary
or winter, a word
that went away
like the snake

**but who knows
where it is now,
ready to speak
or who might be
nearby to hear it
and what they
would think, it's
hard to breathe
sometimes when
a word gets gone.**

17 October 2023

== == == == ==

**Onset of otherness, our friend,
moved far away, the way
they do, the geology
of friendship is a glossy wall,
limestone cliff in rain
even when the sun supposes
small talk into telephone.
Remember when that
was the only way?
And now no voice is heard,
only the roar of distance itself,
lie back and listen,
pretend it is her breath or his
labored breathing as he lifts**

**one more carton into
some new place. Pretending
is the milk of friendship.
We lie there soon after midnight
listing the friends, categories
of affection, the dead, missing,
the alienated, the distant,
the ones still before, the ones
we will have tea with tomorrow.
It helps. Names
last when the friend is gone.**

17.X.23

= = = == =

**So few have I loved
as I love the tree—
is that because the tree
asks so little of me?
Or only seems to. In fact
to lve the tree means
reorganizing my whole
cosmology, psychology,
theology almost on a sunny day.
Love the tree hard.
Tell it what it wants to know,
tell it by listening,
tell it by loving everybody else.**

17 October 20.23

= = = ==

**Ready to unspool the yarn
and read the distance—
this line is a road,
this line a fence.
But who am I
holding this soft wool?
I am one who needs
to feel the far,
stretch it for me,
let there be here.**

18.X.23

= = = ==

**Sanity in brevity
they say
I'm not so sure.
The tree I think
agrees with me
leaf after leaf o
the tree I think!**

18.X.23

== == == == ==

**It isn't the old pitcher
they used to set by the spring
to scoop out the newest
water you could find,
always cold. And yet
the mind is like that too,
always old with your years,
always fresh and clean and cool.**

18.X.23

=====

**When you think of all
the places your mind has been
you begin to wonder
how much it can hold.
It holds islands you've never
set foot on, temples you've prayed in
a thousand mile away.
Yet here yu sit, vaguely
looking out at the vague day,
really not even bothering
to wonder any more. All
thefre is is what we know.**

18.X.23

= = = = =

**The Romans had men
named Five, Six, Seven,
Eight but few named ten,
no one, two, three, four.
What are we forgetting?**

18.X.23

== == == == ==

**Could insect on window screen
be a car three blocks away
and I'm not certain?
Perception is an orchestra
so many signals, so seldom
perfectly in tune. What
am I seeing? Whatever it is
or was is gone. No car, no dark
spot on the move before the eye.
Silence of the empty road.**

18.X.23

== == == == ==

**Iris and her Commie friends painted
green line white again
before St Patrick's Day parade
and got in trouble with the cops
but no harm done. How dare
the city turn the white line green
to hoor noisy Catholics? White
line keeps traffic safe, white
line leads everywhere, future
and past, this very line
leafs to Greenwich Village, leads
to Harlem, sacred spaces,
She kept the true line true.**

18.X.23

== == == == ==

**Outcast images
lurking in the pillow,
sleep dangerous.
Body is still there,
playing soccer
without a ball,
sheer tumult in silence,
wake if I dare.**

2.

**Because it all
is still there,
the pantomime**

**I try ti flee by waking,
waking is another page of it,
bare feet on bedroom carpet.**

**3.
Small horrendous differences
yet I'm gladmt to be awake,
can try another book, a real one,
with words in it.**

**4.
Settle, settle
streets of light,
let traffic calm me**

**and the trees affirm.
I/m safe now,
washed ashore
on the island of the moment.**

19 October 2023

== == == == ==

**Hazards of having
feature losing,
things finding their own
way away.**

**And then where am I
when they are gone?**

**This has puzzled me
since childhood
when my pet snail
crept away and I stood
by the kitchen window
wondering. Where
is away? Will U have**

**to go there too?
It felt like a record
cracking on the photograph,
song broken in half.**

19 October 2023

=====

**Copious curiosity
is all you really need.
It reads your bible for you
and knows the weather,
recalls all capital cities.
even of Malta or Tajikistan,
hides a pigeon feather
in your diary. Or crow.
Or owl. Or who is that
you saw flying over the Hudson
near the Rondout shore?
Name him and go free.**

19.X.23

=====

**Tell a vision
to be gone.
I want to see
with my own
closed eyes.**

19.X.23

== == == ==

Sun on grass—
what more can I ask?
And trees too.
And you. Morning
has its merits.
What tune will
noon sing?

19.X.23

== = == = = = = =

**Well I waded through it
and came out with nothing
worse than wet socks,
can you say the same for all
your philosophy, your dogma?**

20.X.23

== == == == ==

**Rain changes the colors
of the trees. We all know that.
But what does it do to our
own faces? Does it wash
away our masks or does it
let us hide safe behind it?**

20.X.23

== == == == ==

**They waited for me
at the corner, I walked
slow as I could without
seeming to dawdle, hoping
some of them would leave
and let me use language
for the others.**

**But there
they stood when I came up.**

**They assured me they knew
the answers to everything
but I swore I had no questions.
everything was OK just as it was,**

**I cuddled up in my ignorance—
we all know how to deal
with random evangelists.
But they asked me some.
I smiled like a nice foreigner,
shrugged wordless shoulders,
how and they let me walk away.**

20.X.23

== == == == ==

**I want a word
from someone.
Doesn't have to be you
but if it comes
it will have to have come
from some you
after all. Who?
Who are you
who does not speak?**

20.X.23

== == == == ==

**When I want to slow down
I think about stone,
the longer it lasts the truer it is.
When I want to speed up
I think about birds, but the wren
screams and flies away
before I can understand.
Go ack to bed. Back to stone.**

20.X.23

=====

**Find the morning again,
you lost it on the way to school
and then the siren sang
and it was noon. Now
you are thoroughly between.
That is a place you used to love
and even now relaxes you a bit.
But all those people talking,
all those streets whose names
you scarcely remember, Mulberry,
Livonia, Batchelder, hurry to get out
while you can.**

20 October 2023

=====

**Or think of it as a rodeo,
each name you remember
a horse you have to ride,
docile beasts, a bit sluggish.
There is always risk until
the morning wakes you up again.**

20 October 2023

I COULD LIVE IN A BUS

**if it had a latrine,
don't need a kitchen
eat food raw like
the animal I am. Also am
I should say, impersonation
aside. We all have teeth
or had them long enough
to know the tearing of flesh,
grinding of grain. But a bus
has too many widows
to see and be seen by.
Back to the cave, the condo.**

20.X.23

== == == == ==

**The road looks dryer,
sky brighter, the trees
are coming back to green.
I must be doing something
right. Or could it not be me?**

20.X.23

=====

1.

**I have all these words
I have to use them
else what does have mean
except possession
and possession is compulsion.
So something must be done.**

2.

**A wasp bit her thumb.
I say bite but I mean sting.
Start over again.**

3.

**I got it wrong
but get means
to have and have
means I;m wrong
all over again.**

4.

**Or is there place
between get and have,
a moody breezy place
full of low trees, stream
out of sight but
we can hear it flow.**

5.

**Then the words
come to settle
like birds on the lawn.
Things are like other
things repeatedly.
Use them quickly
before they fly away.**

6.

**Nobody taught me
to do this, In fact
I haven't learned do it yet.**

7.

**These words are just
chatter in the lobby
to fill the sad time
before Act Two.**

8.

**As if it ever will begin.
Not sure Act One is done
even now. Is this the lobby?
Where are all the pretty girls?
And the wine bar seems clpsed.**

9.

**Listen to the woodpecker
attacking the shingle;**

**listen to the chump at first light
hammering note-for-me posters
down on the innocent lawn.**

**End of October. The times
want new words. Grace
comes fom thankfulness.**

**Go back to Rome if
by chance you don't believe me.**

21 October 2023

== == == == ==

**Telling the truth
is like flying
over the whole city
floating gently
on your own breath.**

2.

**Telling the truth
is like cuddling down
under the comforter
on a cold morning
and letting sleep
have you again a while.**

3.

**Telling the truth
is like mailing a letter
with no address
on the envelope.
Truth gets always
where it needs to be.**

4.

**Telling the truth
is like pressing your face
gently deeply into
an old fur coat,
mink or beaver,
remembering who wore it once.**

5.

**Telling the truth
is folding your hands
together, amazed
yet again by how well
the fingers slip
through each other
and form a crested dome.
And once again you wonder
what goes on underneath.**

21 October 2023

====

**One same sea
makes every
place different
it touches. Teaches.**

**2.
Eloquent. And we
are its cast of characters
shakespearing around
in this place still called the Globe.**

3.

I stand at the estuary
watching the tide
ripple upstream.
I pray a little,
I think about mother.

4.

The sea permits
such thinking
in our own free time
when we're off duty
with the rocks and trees.

5.

**It tells me to stop killing
and I say What about you
and your sharks? It says
Do what you're told, do
what you can—their time
will come, leave that to me.**

6.

**What with one
thing or another we
couldn't get
to the island
this season
which leaves me**

**needing to say
the whole sea by myself.**

22 October 2023

9G@NY23

**Roundabout traffic circle
go back here you came from
while you still have a chance.**

22.X.23

== == == == ==

**Sunday so quiet
so greyly green
but I hear a bird
chirping slowly,
probably prayer.**

22.X.23

EVEN THOUGH I'M NOT ASHBERY

**I want to know what that woman
by the doorway, tall, is thinking,**

**know it out loud for her
so that all the guests in the room
know someone is really there,**

**really thinking, deciding, even
knowing. Then they can go on,
it's a party after all, a city,
it always is. But she is thinking.**

**I feel the obligation pressing
on my temples. Serves me right**

for being a teetotaler. And what a weird word that is. Oh, she's gone, slipped out while I sang.

22.X.23

WHAT THE OTHER SAID

**Don't tell me your story—
your story told you
and here you stand.
Your story is told—
now tell mine.**

22.X.23

=====

**They'll never know
you're making love
to a mirror. The breath
of your ardent words
steams over the glass
and hides your selfish face.**

22.X.23

DISTRACTION, AN ODE

1.

**Maybe imagine it otherwise:
a clock in the hedge
keeping yesterday's time,
a movie star abducted by aliens
to serve as their deity,
a wave washing up \$5 bills.**

2.

**Now you can settle down
and endure the morning news,
protests in France against
a new highway, huge mudslide
cancelling trains from New York.**

And they're killing each other over there, where Moses talked and Jesus walked and now what?

3.

Change the channel quick or change the subject.

Just now the Bible might not be the best thing to read.

Put on a movie. Try to remember what they are. Or were. Or who you loved on screen, Or who they made you think you are.

22 October 2023

== = == = = =

**Barren mountaineering
sit on whose lap and say
what needs to be done
to make them them and
make you you.**

**The rock
persists in meaningful
silence. Tell it what you
think it is saying, soft
convergence in a hard place.**

**Endure. The difference
welcomes you, sustains.
When you come down so**

**much later from the mountains
the trees will remind you.
Nothing is lost. Every touch
is a passage in scripture.**

23 October 223

== == == == ==

**I woke to tell you
what you could have learned
better by my silence.
We make the same mistake
generation after generation.
I will be still, and let you sleep,
sleep your way to knowing.**

23.X.23

=====

**Name precisely
three places.
Make sure
the names fit.
This is the beginning
of philosophy, that
astrology without stars.**

23.X.23

== ==

To see the nobles
all arrayed, larch
and maple, hear
the organ preludes
of passing cars,
is to know the day
is here, the week,
the crowded local
to God knows where.

Morning muster.
Wash and drink
the first caffeine.

**They have done
it all, now it's all
up to brand-new me.**

23 October 2023

== == == == ==

**Say the name clearly
so the river hears it
and carries it down
to the city she lives in,
the one you mean.
You can almost see her
hearing you, she stands
on the island, tall, waiting.**

23.X.23

== == == == ==

I kissed a cheek
in Boca Loca,
I shook hands
in Utterness, yes.
I've been everywhere,
now I've just got to wake up.

23.X.23

NOMINA

**Mostly the names,
go through them
night by night
each syllable a taste
remembering
is a bodily thing
mind at time a mere
index of sensations.**

2.

**One at a time
hard to tell
in your sleep**

the living from the dead,
dream is like Rilke's
Sufi angels, move
among names,
and the names don't die.

3.

Nomen numen

of course

the Romans said

a name is the energy

that runs the wrld

at least the part of it

we know and move

feeling by feeling through

on our way.

**Way whether the
Romans didn't say.**

4.

**Or is identity
the deepest dream
of all? Can I wake
from who I am
or seem to be or
think myself to be,
all that, all those?**

5.

Change your names

see if it helps

I've known lots

of women named

April May and June

but only one March.

I need to know

a woman named November.

6.

Or should I pretend

all the names I know

are only part-time people.

otherwise busy as trees,

**streams, cliffs, broad
meadows stretching east
if I finally get out of the woods?**

7.

**I lay there recalling
Edward,, Paul, James, Arthur
but is recalling really
calling and do .they hear?
I sleep to hear the answer.**

24 October 2023

== == == == ==

**Cloud shift, blue back now
the trees seem
lit from down below.**

24.X.23, *lune*

== == == == ==

Leave it somewhere else
at someone's doorway
of a house you don't know
but like the look of,
blue shutters, hydrangeas,
let neighbors find the pages
neatly printed out, stapled
together, let them make sense
of what you're afraid to read
again, the words that wrote
themselves with your fingers.
Let people figure it out—
that's what language was
to begin with, what the man

**beside you made of the noises
you were making. Leave it,
the text, the woven thing,
words you've forgotten already
and so you should, to let
the next enigma wake and speak.**

24.X.23

= = = = =

Something needs.

**Sandstone assertions
of our anticline permit
ownership of history
as we pay the mortgage
with our lives. Riverbed.
Unseen persuaders,
riflemen at dawn
vengeance on the sky,
have no brothers
and there they are.**

2.

**We are what's left,
use it, see it, say it,
three notes of an anthem,
march to it, like Lully's
Turkish Celebration,
can't stop hearing it
when first it begins.
See it say it take it
home and live in it.
Otherwise the sky.**

3.

**Children skating
on the frozen canal**

**Dutch town or is it
just one more book
you had to read
because it was there?
The geology of childhood house
guards the petroleum
of all the engines to come.
Amsterdam yes, but it wasn't
winter. A town of staircases
so much rising to be done,
you'd think religion would
long ago have taken care of that.
Floor of church blessedly flat.**

4.

**The freight came past
two a.m. rumble hard
across the river. A bowl
fell off the shelf at dawn,
woke her to wonder.**

**The trees tease me, pretend
to be old women knitting
grey wool in a waiting room.
We have a laugh together,
mild, and nothing breaks.**

5.

**I mean cherish the sandstone,
cherish the cliff, the cottonwood
by the river, how did that**

southern tree find a partner here,
sycamore right at river rim?

6.

The girl in the doorway
plays the bassoon,
the man around the corner
strings holiday lights
on his balcony even though
it isn't even Halloween yet.
The world has its clever ways
of seeming real. That
is what I mean by stone.

25 October 2023

=====

**If you were born today
you couldn't read this,
couldn't hear what I'm saying
when I speak, and even
years later no memory
would enshrine or yield up
what is being said. So why
these words? Where do
sensations go, washing over
a newborn mind and
nothing lingers?**

. . . 25.X.23

== == == == ==

**Is it still love me
or leave me
is it old movie
blonde in shiny
blue taut over
trim hips, is it
still the mind
clawing through
all its crumbs
trying to find
some of the things
that made it,
bruises of memory,**

**is it that things
remembers
themselves in us,
is it still a song?**

26 October 2023

=====

**Something will come back,
always will,
things can't stay away.**

26.X.23, *lune*

NORRIE POINT

**Bushes line the river
right there, leaner,
yellower green now,
seeing water through them
made her think the river
look slimmer, more lake,
less the mighty estuary it is, carrying
whole ocean
onto this small shelf of land along its
ancient road.**

26 October 2023

== ==

**Joseph Massey's lunes
empower
our words' flight to God.**

**If that word's too old
the new word
turns out to be Truth.**

27.X.34, lunes

=====

**Imagine it just
as it is,
then it will hurt less.**

27.X.23 lune

=====

**Where do the clouds go
the child wants to know
and can we go there too?**

27.X.23

== == == == ==

I was listening
to the pillow,
the little noises
just being awake
make, and I thought
of a tall woman clothed
in white, or light,
very tall, her left arm
in the sky. The soft
susurrus of breath
showed her to me.
I bowed down in sleep.

27 October 2923

== == == == ==

**Peel the banana
watch a monkey
to learn how,
steal a peach
from a tree
study Augustine
to learn what
happens then.**

**Everything has
something to teach,
your soft fingers
learn from one another,
and your throat**

**whispers up along
your tongue Open
your dumb moth and sing.**

27 October 2023

== == == == ==

Along the south shore
where I was born
they rent out skiffs
for uncles to go fish.

A few miles inland
there is a hill you could
sled down on snow,
quasi-legal a few days
in any year.

Along
the shore of clams, of
crabs, of marsh,

**I heard a bittern once
and saw a cat sneaking
through grass taller
than any man. The sea
is what I'm trying to say,
say what the sea permits
us on this raft of a continent
to which we cling.**

27 October 2023

== ==

**Witness to a wedding
always going on
we sit insilky science
listening tot he whisper
of the everlasting vows.**

28.X.23

= = = = =

**A forest is like
a crowded subway car—
so many people!
Be one of them a while
but make sure you just
stand in the crowd and behave.**

28.X.23

== == == == ==

**Each word we borrow
from language
must be read. Sing!**

28.X.23 *lune*

== == == == ==

The logic of the situation
encourages strong shoes,
warm clothes even, dress
by the calendar because
you never know.

So wait here
with me until the music comes—
I'll know it's here when I
see you start to dance.

Till then, think of silence
as an edible thing, rich

**with nutrients found
hardly anywhere else.**

**Yes, it's morning. When else
would I dare to talk to you?
Apples on the table, clean dishes
waiting to be cupbarded.
Is that a word? Wake up
finally and tell me.**

28 October 2023

== == == == ==

**When you see the brown leaves
thick littered on the lawn
think of how a book can be
a meretricious so-and-so
but don't blame the ones who
printed it or even the limp-
conscience type who write it.
Any book you read is
nobody's fault but your own.**

28.X.23

== == == == ==

Wait.

There is always a gate.

The smell of something

baking, not sweet,

crust on a quiche maybe,

wait. The smell

walks around the lawn.

There must be a gate,

wait. The flowers

asleep, even the lae-

blooming rose of Sharon

and you see her

in minds eye, whoever she is.

Palestine. Long ago

**but the trouble lingers. Wait.
Somewhere there is a gate.
Kindness helps. And paradox,
explore furthest by sitting still.**

28.X.23

== == == == ==

for Chris

**Think of the Bible
and stay where you are,
light loves you,
and the dark has interesting
things to whisper.
So the Charkles is the Jordan,
who not, and from here
you can stand and look down
across tJamaica Plain
stretching to the sea.
Something like that. Here
is everywhere: that's**

**what birds are trying so hard
song after song to tell us.
No camels passing,
butthe camel driver waits
in his Uber ready for the journey.
We have all been here
a long time, and our best
music is to go on enduring.**

28 October 2023

== == == == ==

**The ethical thing to do
always begins with you.
AmI helping or hindering,
hurting you or healing?
All the rest is baroque stuff,
fluffy ornamentation
to confuse the mind. Help,
don't hurt. What more
cana anyone do? Even you.**

28..X.23

= = = = =

**The small tree
stood there a few years
at the topm of a blank page
said to me this morning:
Think of me
as a tropp of women
in fluttering clothes
making their way
brave as Spartan heroes
under the overwhelming obvious.**

29 October 2023 (waking)

== == == == ==

**Some rain, some not.
We live in the gleam,
things possible as birds.**

29.X.23

== == == == ==

**Waking
without remembering—
what a wonder,
walking out of the ocean
not even wet.**

29.X.23

== == == == ==

for Charlotte

**You see so much for
me, and you
give eyes to my heart.**

29.X,23

== == == == ==

**When I look out
this late October window
I see November
hulking in the trees.
Dark development.
Walk in the late light
O citizen of time!**

29.X.23

== == == == ==

1.

**The words wouldn't wander
far i the woods this day.**

Tiis way the silences

argue plausibly

**with themselves and with
the vigilant trees.**

Leaving me

to break my fast

on the breccia of dreams:

alphabet of states,

handshakes of celebrities,

sun over Yosemite.

2.

**The philosopher kept
a bottle of ale
in his jacket pocket.**

**He knew the rules,
river water only goes so far
then ocean washes it down.**

3.

**I'm always using
someone else's
words and so are you.**

4.

**The Great Depression
was beginning, naturally
the talkies came on time,
sound films to make us
listen at last to words
no one spoke to is
but we could hear,
The birds still cry
thinking we can hear them
in our muffled world.**

5.

**But all that was before.
before we were born,
but the silence lasts.**

6.

**Kissed a girl and made her cry—
remember the old song?**

So much for music.

I loved Mahler

but read only the dictionary.

7.

They breathe easier

now, a little,

words of us

welcome in the woods.

8.

**I keep trying to talk
but knowing
keeps getting in the way.**

30 October 2023

== == == == ==

KRIL

**As id what feeds a whale
feeds me As if the sea
inside us is the same.
As if autumn sunlight
is a dream and dreams
are real and here I am
as if, as if an ancient warrior
opened his backpack on the hill
and spread out breakfast
and we joined him there
smoking qyuetly together
over a conquered plain.**

**As if the argument went on
all right until the lovers
kissed and felt no shame
and idleness us taught
to children in new schools
walls made of glass and never
shut out the obvious and do
as little as you can. As if
the rabbit on the lawn
remembered the Jurassic
and still is afraid. As if
my fear were sisterly
to his or the sunshine really
is a message and a warning
but warning us of what
we;; wait and see. As if**

**the eels swim upstream
far inland and they do.**

As if everything water says is true.

31 October 2023

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**Now I have to read up
on what I think I said.
Maybe I meant
something after all.**

31.X.23

