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A woman is standing on the shore. She is tall, very tall, maybe 700 feet fall and her left arm holds high a shell or shallow bowl open to the rain a thousand feet above. Her whole body is red, not dark, not pale, more like blood with some water in it and a little air. Those who live in that land get to drink from that
special water she milks from the sky, every now and then she brings the shell gently down so they come and drink.

1 December 2023
One note at a time
but then what?
Where does music end?

1.xii.23 lune
How to rescue him seemingly safe in his study from the boy wandering around the woods in his head.

No way. We are what we were plus a little more.

1.XII.23
The echoes, things have them too, not just sounds, echoes of what we have seen, touched, imagined.

1 December 2023
AWAY

1.
Think it away,
away is the only
place for it,
away, over the Peloponnesus,
over the Euxine Sea—
No, stop right there,
we’ve been here before,
Celt and Hun, Magyar and Goth,
so turn around, hurry away,
away once led us here.
Be here again.
2. Where could away ever be but this land? Great dark ravine north of Saugerties—you can open all the boutiques you like in Catskill or Hudson the Cleft will still be there, pre-human time slicing down through our own, road closed in winter.

3. Because we’re always trying to be here. That’s what thinking’s for
dear God we are all religion, say it in Latin, Tibetan, Hebrew, we are trees in God’s forest, waving eloquent branches in wind.

4. Thinking and hearing. The river helps. The city is the same. Away deep underground.

5. Of course I want to be the tree that talks to thee, the writing spelled out on the birch bark how
many years ago?
That’s the trouble with white—it shows what it knows.
Think it instead
and let the silence deliver your message.

1 December 2023
So many days it takes to tell—
one to write
and one to read
and one to print it out
for the eyes of a stranger—
who will he be,
or she, who comes along
and finds the message
fluttering at their feet?

2 December 2023
A little arbitrary
but why not.
A gull is glamorous
on the deck rail.
The Albany express
slips by almost silently
at 70 mph maybe
by the river.
Is speed the seed
of something else?

2. XII.23
But let the litmus paper rest
you have another way
to tell the truth—
look in the sky,
let the flight of birds
divide the sphere above you
into reasonable segments,
call the segments Islands
or see them as parts
of a new alphabet,
you love alphabets,
alphabets are made of letters and all
the letters
are to you.
2. With all the fragments ready in your hand you know enough to begin and beginning is the whole problem, isn't it, once you start your geometry takes over, the slope does all the work by itself, no need for you to interfere. Glide, Master, glide.
Sometimes it’s time
and sometimes something else.
You can feel it,
even squeeze it in your fist.

It’s been here all our lives,
they call it snow in summer,
palm tree on the moon.

But we know better—
it is the fierce awareness
that this, this, is what there is.

3 December 2023
This is how the poem works. If you stop reading, take your eyes off the page for a moment, the words are flushed away. When you look back the page is blank and in that blankness your eyes see into the heart of silence where what you really need to read begins to speak.

3 December 2023
They stand there:  
she in her slim sandals,  
he in scruffy sneakers.  
The space between husband's feet  
and wife's feet  
extends into a vast plain,  
a wooden wilderness.  
Sometimes one or the other launches  
a cry  
across the plain:  
a command, a petition,  
a sacrament
and sometimes whatever they sent reaches to the other curls around them and they hear.
But sometimes midway it falls to the ground, into silence.
wood loves silence best.

4 December 2023
When we we’re going to the country we're always told to walk on the side of the road facing traffic and so we did obedient as ever.

But as I walked alone back then and walk along now, I wonder which is better:

The fear of what is coming towards us or the fearing what might be hurtling towards us from behind
so when I walk facing traffic I see the
crazy man with a big beard coming at
70 on a motorcycle towards me—
would I rather instead be on the
other side of the road just imagining
some gentle person in an old Chevy
slowly driving past me?
what kind of fear is best— that
which comes towards us or that
which we dread or hope coming from
behind?

4 December 2023
Let the door swing open
so the world you see
is out there but
already has you in it

you are part of what you see
and what you see
is part of someone else
can you picture them already even
with your hand
ready to twist the knob
and set the world free?
2.

on the other side of the mirror just as on the other side of a piece of paper an alternative exists. Be grateful for it—the less you know about it the better smile into the dark, your hands are waiting your legs are waiting, just as you are shocked to realize the mountains are waiting across the river, and the river is waiting, waiting so busily so steadily so honestly so truthfully. Your turn comes now.

4 December 2023
Wander and wonder just what you’re after,.
settle and snooze and get a glimpse of it in dream. Sumptuous ignorance is best, Turn on the news to fetch some more.

5.xii.23
Tossed up on the sands of the say he lets the sunlight dry ocean off, drenched as he was in sleep. There. Dry man in dry bed still not sure what day it is. Or what any day is or means. Dry enough but not clear. Dream still with him like snow at the side of the road from last week’s moderate fall.

5.xii.23
We're sitting at a picnic table
on the tiver banks
of a small city
not our own
The river though is our own
because we live by it
on its other flank
but it's with us now,
over to you right
is a sycamore-maple
a strange tree I know
nothing about except
that we have one
in our backyard
on Cuttyhunk Island
and beyond this one a small
cottonwood which I associate with
yourself not so common
up here on the edge of a small city
not ours. The river is ours
we are the trees’,
we are the river’s
we belong to what we see
of course and what we see
we suppose belongs to us
in our strange American child fantasy
economy of mind.

Centuries ago they plodded across
the sa;t marshes
across the silk road,
deserts of the north, they came here
oh no, that was us,
we came here
and all we know of us
is where we are,
all over the place,
strange trees,
strange life around them
but it always the river,
the same inexhaustible truth
of all the beautiful rivers.

6 December 2023
I keep thinking
I am a person of some consequence
standing at the seaside somewhere
in Italy
or strolling on the beach
in Florida, red sands of Flagler,
watching the sea,
standing still watching the sea, when
all I am and all I could be
is a 3-year-old child
gazing with yearning and amazement
and reverence
at his mother,
all of it, all of her
arms wide open
before him
and if I'm lucky
ther’ll be a seagull
or even a pelican of my side.

6 December 2023
So I'm wondering what I'm always wanting the little brook to rush by like Sshuubert, the linden tree standing by the well.

I'm wondering what I always want, the sun to rise out of the mountain and the mountain to tell me what it learned as it gave birth to the sun so I have a song to sing you.
Music used to be shellac
then it was vinyl
now it just comes to us
invisible, just
as it was long ago,
something that
happens to the air.

6.xii.23
Watch what happens when nothing happens: everybody starts doing something else. That’s jow art was born, and why Malraux was right to call art the voice of silence. Roaring sacred in every street.

6.xii.23
It was the only place I knew, nickel stuck to the window sill 
old man walking his collie 
out there in the alley 
past the pussy willow 
and the creaking fence. 
Do people have dogs anymore? 
Do people still grow old?

7 December 2023
Lapsang suchong
long name
for a sip of tea.
Maybe that’s how
ot works, the
bigger the referent
the smaller the name.

7.xii.23
If you encounter ancient stone, steps or terrace or mound, settle down on it and let what it knows seep up into you.

It will. Stone does, stone retains and relates what has been done on or near or to it.

Listen with your bones
then come home
and tell us all you can—
we need that,
even more than we know.

7.xii.23
What does it mean, sending Tarot cards to a woman. It means women know reality anyhow, even the future. They just have to be teased into telling. Bright colors, weird characters. When you come down to it, everything is just a reminder.

7.xii.23
All the snow has melted exception on the roof of the gazebo proof we chose wisely the coolest spot to build our summer house. But now the white roof glares at me through the dark trees so summer seems very far away.

7 December 2023
The gate summons the entrant, the path summons the walker, a stone wall summons a listener. I wonder who the sea summons and how they obey?

7.xii.23
What I learned in Leipzig: listen to every wall.

8.xii.23
If I were here now
I could beat rest.
But I am there,
with you, wherever
you are, why
elsewhere holds you
in its tender clasp
and why I can’t let go.

8.xii.23
DUPLICATION

In the dream
everything had to be done
in duplicate.

Or is dream itself
the duplicate of a day
yet to be,
or fell away long ago,
before I was even there
to say goodbye? Words
I don’t like to say.

And in the dream
every item had to be labeled,
right-hannd faucet,
hook to hang umbrella from,
it seldom rains.

Or did it mean
the brute force of language
makes us label
every thought and feeling,
everything our hands or eyes
can touch?

That’s when the dream
moved to the part called waking,
and ir was just the same,
two legs, two hands, two
windows in the north wall
none too bright, I prayed for unity and then I heard your footsteps on the stairs.

8.xii.23
Another word for this
waits underground
like April’s daisy,
nothing fancy,
just accurate and true—
I’ll know when my spring comes.

8.xii.23
Childhood vivid
(not my own—been there, done that)
vivid, everything new,
everything to be done!
What a contract it is
to be born, you sign it
with your first breath,
and they never tell you
how much time you have
to get it done.

Vivid
because when suddenly
you’re alive
everything else seems living too
not just your aunt’s old cat
or the painter on the scaffold,
not just the water in the brook
and the sun swimming in it,
it all is, you have to see it too,
no minute to waste
even if you wanted to.

9 December 2023
When whistling was common—whole melodies, not just salutes to passing eyefulls—one heard Cole Porter of course and Fats Waller and even sometimes Flotow’s *M’appari*. We liked wholeness, I guess, and now make do wit bits and pieces, drumbeat from passing pickup, pop screams as you pump gas.

9.xii.23
So there is complaining to be done. But why do I have to do it?
And just asking that is doing it already, *planctus* they used to say *naturae*, everything has some sorrow to report. But bravely we could choose to hear them all in counterpoint, ten thousand different moans 6o make one forest sing.

9.xii.23
Whalebone, lottery,
whalebone on the lawm,
here has not always been here.
Things toss and tumble,
cam’t ever tell what will roll out.
Clam shell. Rabbit runs away.

9 December 2023
= = = = = = =

Word waits
pn the table
for me to
type it up.
There. here
is what it
always means.
Frey sky. Comfort
of morning.

10 December 2023
Pirouette. Earth is said to be doing that while no one notices. Except for scientists, who specialize in what isn’t there. I like fables so I don’t complain. But I know we live on an unmoving rock in the sea of time and nothing moves except we sometimes do.

10.xii.23
Lead him up the mountain, 
let him find 
his own way back.

That is all a woman can do, 
and lucky is the lad she does it to.

Religion, 
philosophy, logic, law—
all by-products of his stumbling back home.
Have I said enough or too much? Let’s hope the second movement will be calmer, if this turns out to be music after all.

10.xii.23
Yesterday a yam,
tomorrow
tomato. Bring salt.

10.xii.23 lune
VISTA

Closed both eyes
pressed right hand
over eyes to shut out
what little light there was,
and saw.

1.
In a car, driver’s seat,
on a highway headed east
along Lake Constance.
The road was coming
faster and faster
the car standing still.
A voice said:
The road does all the work.
2.
peppercorns scattered on a sheet of typing paper. Could taste without touch.

3.
Borth cliffs on Oahu over the sea. Horizon. Always another island.
4. Carousel in Central Park,
   Pages of an almanac
   flutter on a park bench.

5. The word window
   printed nearly on the wall—
   best of both worlds.

6. priest kneeling
   by empty bed.
Smell of honey in the room
He is praying
in another language
than language.

7.
Empty rowboat
 tethered to a rock
bobs up and down
in the wake of a big
barge mid-channel.
Oars are on the shore
as if we were here already.
8. Huge parking lot only one car in it, car idling, nobody in it.

9. Snow on Round Top none down here. Life is sharing, the river here very wide.
10.
Weathercock spins,
knows how to catch
a breeze I barely feel.

. . . 10-11.xxii.23
ULSTER LANDING

Mendicant seagulls calling for alms, and like the monks they are, their cries a pure blessing. Yet the town posted a dumb sign Feeding Wildlife Prohibited. What kind of religion is this?

11.xii.23
Rose
is the past tense of rise
so language does make sense
sometimes
a window opens
gait goes

but for so long
I have been waiting
for the wall
the other wall,
   the one made of silence
not of stone or brick
but made of the silence
of people waiting beside mem
my brothers and my sisters waiting
for the word
to come back to me,
some bit of all I have said restored.

    I have given them plenty,
I’m sure some little will come back
to me for them—
doesn't have to be a rose
it could just be gate
    open in the middle of a field
gate in no fence,
a pure opening.

    12 December 2023
Everything is perfectly natural only somehow sometimes suddenly gets added and everything changes.
A human permission has come.

12.xii.23
Or let me
in another language
than language.
Or politics
where words
come to harm.
Waiting
doesnt hurt too much,
music helps.

12.xii.23
Bridge,
is it an unnatural thing??
A human artifice
it joins together
what nature in mighty
ages and efforts
put asunder
with canyons and rivers.

Or are we part of nature too?
He stands at the railing
looking down at the river
so full of life,
full of going and being.
Then If we’re lucky, he turns and walks back home, just thinking.

12.xii.23

==
MARKET

I was walking through the market
Blake Avenue in the old days
pushcart fish and pushcart apples,
melons round and ripe as adolescent dreams
I look young, believe me,
beneath my feet the ordinary asphalt
street luke most days of the week with cars and stores
and creatures like me
but here it was market day the pushcarts lined up both sides,
vendors selling their wares silently smiling snuggling at the heat oozing from their stoves.

it is the market and the market has been with us forever, as long people feeding other people and there I was alone not fearing anybody, grabbing a knish, paying for it 15 cents 15 whole cents enough for three subway rides I start woth the corner of it and loved it, the peppery
saltiness inside, amazing how Peruvian potato turns ancient tin their hands, taste of Talmud and 4000 years, and the man rubbing his hands against the cold.

On the corner the movie theater I can't remember what was playing, I was not watching.

I was here at the fish, the cheese the tomatoes shivering in cold on marketplace market place why am I ever elsewhere what am I going to offer you?

13 December 2023
The miniature moment unfolds into daylight. Stay sound or get up into the zone of danger, the imperious, imperative now.

2. We know by observation that most get up a few give up and stay. I too often bump door frames with my elbow.
3.
It keeps coming back, the choosing moment a thousand times a day. Slowly we are digested by our choices. Did I just say that? Who am I anyhow?

13.xii.23
A bookshelf is like
the box score of a game
not played yet.
It is such a strange thing
that ordinary hands
can move whole books around,
make Trotsky come before
Thucydides. A dangerous place,
full of echoes
you consent to hear.
The order in which you
encounter things—
that is your secret name.

13.xii.23
WHEN TRUTH IS NOT ENOUGH

I asked her who won the Derby.
She answered Some horse.

13.xii.23
Think of it
the only reason I'm talking
is because you're there

think of it
you make me talk
think of it
no one else can make me say what
you make me say
only you you you you.

13.xii.23
A shrug of the shoulders lifts the world. It is important to remember each person lives at the exact center of the universe—he she you me everyone who can save me is at the center of the world whatever me does is more than all the world. Remember that when shrug your shoulders Be the world.

14 December 2023
A sacrament of sorts,  
hay stacks on broad field  
gone before winter.  
The clock knows all about us.

Feed my lambs, he said,  
and not just them.  
Feed everyone.

The sky too  
an open mouth  
feed it your wise breath.

14 December 2023
TRAJECTORY

L I look at the old cannonballs neat heaped by the dismal monument.
Look at the kids playing basketball, softball, herded by gossiping mothers. Is it all more about throwing or catching? Arc of movement through the air sheer mystery.

14.xii.23
Does ‘sheer mystery’ mean one you see the light right through?

14.xii.2023
Stood in the woods wondering. Then had to pee modestly behind a big walnut tree careful not to splash root or bark or tiny mushrooms.

Reverence is all. Could human fluid be of service to the woods, to the world? How quick the piss sank in, just a faint glisten where it fell.
Gift or defilement?
Or are they the same?
No wonder he stands there zippered up, still wondering.

14.xii.23
The news is what they choose to tell me.

Let me listen instead to the voiceless busy doing everything there is.

14.xii.23
The minute a poet stops writing love poems (to girls or guys or God) he’s in trouble. Philosophy raises its snaky head and says what no one needs to hear. Or all the buffoons of politics local or otherwise will shout their bluster through his verses. No, love is better. Or maybe love and geology, or those red flowers with thorns, remember?

14.xii.23
SAPLINGS

A fence of course is a tease a temptation.

Music flows over and through it easily while we can only watch if even that, some fences too high for the ordinary eye.

But how interesting to think
what lies behind,  
the landscape, the  
architecture of otherness.  

15 December 2023
Abandon evidence, give the mind a rest. The world heard you coming and hid under the cool pillow on your bed.

15.xii.23
Daily life is masquerade—
we all know that
but few admit it.

No one has seen my actual face
no one knows what army
the uniform I wear comes from.

15.xii.23
FIRST DAYS IN PARIS

Shocked to find
two drivers on each bus,
one to drive, one
to collect the fare
and keep public order.

It was summer,
and the women’s dresses
were of cloth I didn’t know,
and when I got off
at a busy square
a white-robed monk
sped by me on his scooter
so I wondered where I was,
so I climbed the north tower of Our Lady and studied the city laid out below me and with the cookie-cutter of my brain tried to guess out the neighborhoods, felt brave enough to go back down and walk around and walk around across the own and found on a curb a crisp new 1000 franc note
(worth three dollars at the time), success! welcomed, I walked to a party at the embassy, delighted to find it sat on the Avenue Paul Valery, the thinker, the poet I was reading on the boat. Someday America will get lucky too.

15 December 2023
Long flight of stairs to the room where the sentence ends. Rest there, cat your breath before you unwrap the meaning. Did you know that every human utterance is a Christmas present for a naughty child? Unwrap. Bgin to understand.

16.xii.23
Stone towers of Cappadocia stand in mind. You know, you were there once, playing your what was it, mandolin? bouzouki? saved you from hearing too loud what religion does to landscape, word thst shatters bedrock but the towers sray.

16.xii.23
Close enough to Greece to start swimming through the alphabet. That’s all they really had, their words and fancy philosophic propositions just random congeries of letters. In the damp of their utterance meaning clung to them like mold. I mean the world is very old.

16.xii.23
Windsock small airport.
No traffic
but the faithful wind.

16.xii.23 lune
The dusty window
gives a sheen to the trees,
a vowel long drawn out–
the song is different
but the music same.
2.
So go outside
to glimpse the actual–
it’s always waiting,
always in its own way.
And everything
is always somewhere else.
16.xii.23
To know the name and then
the boulevard runs north
under walnut trees or east
under all kinds of I don’t know,
I never know, names are rabbits
they run away under the $x\ y\ z$
trees that clutter the brain,
o I didn’t mean to moan,
it was an old car groaning by,
a name like Studebaker
but who am I?

Register
with the constable and try,
try harder, to go to sleep.
Ancillary energies are there at your disposal, you think they’s girls you used to know but the wheel turns easy and they steer you. We think we’re driving but we’re riding.

17 December 2023
A month ago I broke my arm, got a lune from that

17.xii.23 lune
sometimes it’s enough
to see birth trees,
white-barked, uninscribed,
white uprights standing there,
pointing, welcome silence.

2.
Then if you must write
scribble on the face of the moon
and let the shadows fall
back on the paper patient ahead.
3.
Yes, you must write, that’s how we pay for all the breath we breathe in, think a while, interrogate, use, breathe out. The next thing you say is what it means.

4.
Still, those wordless white trees tell me everything.
5.
Or walk on the moors
where there are no trees
and read your forest
in the soft rain falling.

17.xii.23
In Brooklyn just north of Blake Avenue, on California east of Lake Avenue, here the road is called a river, welcome home.

17.xii.23
We went to the opera and heard *Faust*, it was snowing lightly as we drove home. Childhood enough for anyone.

17.xii.23
Sing out
to help
seabirds fly
to the sky,
hard for them
especially when
nobody knows
where the sly ends.

sing loud, loud
like a lover,
so on your breath
they rise
into the skies,
yes, always
more than one.,
but always up,
always up to you.

18 December 2023
Haptic theology,
touching God
on the skin of the other.
Reverence renews the world.
But it is only the beginning.

18.xii.23
Ask thy ball why it bounces. Its exclamation leads you eight years later to a Ph.D.

The ball is a missionary of that weird Reality religion and you are its latest convert.

18.xii.23
I’ve never been in Nevada. I look at that wedge in the map and wonder. Sometimes what I have never known seems like a flower, close enough to catch its scent. Someday I’ll try this out on Tennessee.

18.xii.23
The activity was all inside the ballroom of her brain, safer there where music never stops.
Christmas marks the birth of ne child into the world.
Childbirth is not easy.
So all the noise and shouts and songs and slaughtered beasts and trees are the birth pangs we bring to Mary as she labors to bring God to be with us.

19.xii.23
I want to tell you something about Christmas, something I don’t know.

It will come clear if you listen hard to what I’m not saying.

Then you can tell me.

19.xii.23
This is a Christmas card
though it looks a little
like a poem, don’t be fooled, Xmas
Card is what it is.
Wedge it in the mirror frame
or stick it on the fridge, or just
leave it with all the others,
heap on the table soon
swept away in the deserts
of January. But here it is,
angels on it (they all look
rather like you) and evergreens
still alive in the ground, maybe
a snowflake but no drifts, one
man shivering on the corner trying to say *God Yul* in Swedish, that’s me, show-off to the last. But here it is. Sorry, I can’t find an envelope that fits.

19 December 2023
When the sim sets
beyond the parking lot
the cars wake up

nothing is easy
everything is far away
and only this to tell you.

`19.xii.23 Rbk
Meaning to do it
and then doing it,
a feast of never
or a camel carrying
the whole sky
on his back.

19.xii.23 Rbk
Mil was neither
but wanted to be both

childhood is a cowboy movie
where they all speak Chinese

Mil sat on the ground
beneath a pear tree and waited.

School is a long day's sleep
preparing or a night of learning.

19 December 2023
GROTTO

Off Broadway Brooklyn
a grotto for Our Lady
reverently mimicking Lourdes.

The el passed close,
my cousins lived across the street,
on the walls of the church
dangled crutches and trusses
of those cured and proving it,
who would doubt a wheelchair?

The feel of miracles, clutch
of family. trains and shouts add doubts, all too much for a child. All I could do was stare at the Lady in the cave.

20 December 2023
Forget the tree for a moment, leave trees to the Buddhists to meditate beneath and find their own truth there.

Christmas should be happening inside us, inside us the child is born, inside us forgiveness truth beauty — all that has to be in us, from us, coming out of us, not something hanging on branches, something
exciting in us we yield
like music, no tree, let trees
stand alive in the earth,

Oy a;; has to come from us.
So when you think of Christmas and
all the noise and all the drama and all
the cries and all the toys, start to
think
instead of a child of in you
the strange feeling that one day
strikes inside you,
love celebrates in you.
But something else is needed—
the world needs something too,l it
needs you.

20.xii.23
No plane, sir,
I want to move
silently through space,
space is a quiet place
it has its own soft anthem,
its morning hymns
its serenades.

But I can't hear a note of them
over the engine roars,
so I need another way to move,

something I can do
while still alive, magic shoes
that know how
to leave the Earth
and yet one day come back.

20 December 2023
It is a matter of loyalty
once you have seen
something even once
but seen it clearly
you have to be
faithful to what you've seen.

In that way trees can stand
by thousands of a millions
and we can take comfort
from their live, leaves
in summertime then learn
from the inscriptions their branches
write across
the winter sky. We can take comfort from anything just standing there.

21 December 2023
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From the undergrowth of organized religion arose a child burbling nonsense about forgiveness, healing, love.

They soon got rid of him but echoes linger of his conversation. Listen hard and try to do some of what he says.

21.xii.23
WINTER SOLSTICE 2023

Winter solstice comes at the end of the year whose name it bears, as if all those days and months were needed to patch together such an improbable number.

“As if” is a scaly wag, I admit, but I do love imagining the reality of the real.

21.xii.23
Opulent spruce
among bare trees—
I marvel at the contrast.

The mind is an animal
caged in a zoo,
excited by every living
thing that comes
along to look at it.

21 December 2023
Rhinebeck
EVIDEMCE

Blue sky
tattered cloud,
I’m walking on a path
along the road
wondering where it goes.

People have passed
before me, I find
a Pepsi bottle cap,
then a pencil,
nobody uses pencils
anymore, how long
has this ben lying here?
and then a peach pit
still icky with wet glop,
who dropped it,

a bird or girl,

boys don’t eat peaches?

I lumber on,

weary, every

step deeper into mystery.

22 December 2023
Arrowing. knowing where to go and how to get there fast.

We always use the sky, catapults, telegraph, radio waves. *Sky be my path* we cry and Pharaoh laughs at us from the stone.

22.xii.23
LONDON, SAY.

Unwise to read gaily newspapers in a foreign city, especially one where you know almost all the words.

You might think you live here, might lose a sense of where or even who you are.

It’s happened to me
more than once so
I’m still not sure
I ever got home.

22.xii.23
Sixty-one percent of New York State is woodland! Fact. More trees that me’s. Some of it even might belong to no one, or to the state. And what is the state? A busy girl in Albany, with too many enemies. Forget them. Just walk in the trees.

22.xii.23
A new year is coming,
it better be better,
my arm still hurts
from November.

22.xii.23
It doesn’t come all at once, the door opens by itself (our crude word for gravity) and the light walks in.

2. Look around the place. This is your dream, get to know the wall, the rocking chair, the dog. The dog does nothing, but you don’t like dogs.
3.
Paint the walls black,
hang op a painting,
anything not to be natural.
But nature is nothing
but change. Stymied,
make your way back to sleep.

4.
At least the dog is gone.
Sunrise on a cloudy day.
Go through the alphabet
again, make sure
you’ve left no one out.
End of sentence. Sleep again.
5. Am I telling you too much when too much is also too little? Wave forms, It is the North Atlantic of sleep, deep and REM and in between? No. No. Count the drops of water om the sea sea sea.

6. Remedial math they teach in schools, how about remedial sleep,
calm nurse trained
in hypnology sits
by your bedside until.

7.
Face the camera,
   try to smile.
Or frown and turn
your profile
like a silver coin,
ancient empire
you still rule, easy,
baby, peace.
8.
She sighs,
it didn’t work,
you’re still awake.
She pats you on the forehead
and goes away, leaves
you a story to take her place.

9.
You have to tell it
to yourself
all by yourself
until you get it right.
Right means the tale
dissolves into sleep
and carries you there.
10.
Why can’t sleep be easy?
Or why can’t we sleep all the time, like minerals, stone or metal? Or is steel maybe awake all the time, handlebars of your bike?

23 December 2023
We don’t have a name for this kind of thinking. It’s like a crystal bowl full of hydrangeas blue and white mixed, it’s like a ruined tower in the desert, with goats shelter inside from wind, it’s like a crowded day in Central Park, dozens clustered round a cage, staring at the monkeys. It’s like a rabbi walking
slowly round the reservoir, blessing all the water who know who will drink.

23.xii.23
PHOS AUGEI

Light is growing, increasing, the sun giving more each day early Christians shouted it like their Pagan neighbors, the light increases for all of us, not a theory but a gift, the world gives it to itself, to us, we are children, we play with the light, we grow with light.

24 December 2023
Waiting like a wanderer
for his feet to stop
I lay there in the forest
on the outskirts of sleep.
Then it said in my head
Get up. I wonder whose
voice that is, but I obey.

24.xii.23
Shallow bowl
full of rain
she offered
back to the sky.

I see her
standing there
on what as to be
an island,

how else
could there be
such space
all around her,
no one there
but sky to talk to
but everything answering?

24.XII.23
The brain is the pilot in a random fuselage, can’t tell whether the engines are on or off or even if there is an engine, can’t tell if the crate is midair or on the ground. All the pilot sees are wheels and dials and things to touch, but what happens when you touch them? In front are muddy windows, the only sound is something like breathing, but very loud.
All the pilot wants is to make the plane go, go to a place the brain can vaguely sense, some place the brain still thinks it knows.

24/25.xii.23
Christmas! The fence falls down, the door flies open. For one little day the way seems clear—what we are might be enough to be. Becoming one of us he made us one of Him.

25 December 2023
Enough is seldom.
But once in Dakota
I stood on a cliff and saw
nothing but lush grassland
stirring in the wind
all the way to the horizon.

25.xii.23
How many millions in a miracle?
How many pages in an unwritten book?
How many daisies will spring let happen, and who will bend down to count them?

25.xii.23
Winter wandering through its new nude trees,  
Time like any other child moves around the world trying to understand where it has been, where it has been even before it finds out where it is now because now is afterimage of before as then is what is left of the beginning.
I wait with it
I'm always waiting
I like to wait
wait means doing nothing
but looking eagerly
in every direction,
every direction but inside—
that dark place full of
who knows what
it's too dark in there to see
but I hear them at it.

3.
Engines roar in middle distance, not many cars on Christmas Eve where would they be going,
we want to be where they are, opening that presents
or hiding them, stuffing things in stockings, hanging them from trees—
but strange things we do to celebrate a birth,
a birth that means like any birth we are brought all altogether into the world and then what?
Wait and see.
4.
Wait, want.
The two words are so similar
A man who does them
a woman who doesn't
they know how close
they are to each other.
Someday let their fingers touch.

24/25.xii.23
[dictated]
Stood still
side of the highway
fifty years ago
gazing calmly
up the road towards Hudson.
I stand here now
and think I'm in a new
place now, now I could be anywhere
but I'm here.
What does one do here?
Isn't it enough
to stand on the road?

24/25.xii.23
for C.W.

All it takes to make
great art is a smart
woman and a blank wall.
She moves, little by little,
faces us or turns away,
not making signs
with hands or arms,
just the whole body moving,
slow, slow, pivoting,
her shadow dancing behind her,
secret script of what she means.
We watch, compelled
by the smallest gesture,
images woven in images, 
Greek temple, the gods swimming through stone.

25.xii.23
I tried to open up one of your drawings to understand it better. The long sweep of black across the top I tried to pry up but was too heavy. A scarlet patch in the corner I tried to twist up and off but it wouldn’t budge. The I tugged at the edges of a blue curve down below, maybe widen it enough
to swim in. Nothing worked. I put the picture down with reverence, a little sad. But then I heard your voice saying “No need to change it. It loves us just as we are.”

25.xii.23
for S.Q.

You were twenty
when we met,
I was well over a hundred.
We have been having
one conversation ever since
using almost
anything but words.

25.xii.23
THE NIGHT AFTER CHRISTMAS

1. The deer on the lawn
the clouds in the sky
what am I doing here
all alone?

2. It is an ancient poem
to be born on earth,
a haiku heavy as granite,
soft as the sandstone
cliffs of Ulster.
3. That is to say it is a question. But then everything is.

4. Do your homework go to school jury home and play the fool— you remember all that but why can’t I?

5. The deer still there leading her fawn.
suddenly to sense
this mothering world.

6.
Angels in our ears,
last night’s Messiah
from Buffalo. I used
to work in that town.
What I remember most
is Canada. Alien nation.
Music mothers us too
and I slept too late.

7.
Too late to be born?
I wonder. Misty
today, not cold.
Brits call this Boxing Day when all their gifts get stowed away.
As if the coming year needed to be naked to begin.

8.
Just like infant us, just like the fawn nibbling at birdseed fallen. Is that good for her to eat?
9.
I dreamt of a Samoyed from Siberia who said
We are cannibals and so should you.
We come out of one another’s bodies so we should return there when there is no more breath to keep us moving in this strange world. I shivered at the tender logic of his sharp teeth.
9.
See what comes of sleeping late or early? Dark room where you see what isn’t there, hear music no one plays, you know all that, archbishop in his cloven hat preaching to an empty church.

10.
I don’t see the deer now when I look out, maybe my anxiety is catching and they took flight. There, I admit it,
morning means anxiety. 
Decade after decade 
being late to school. 

11. 
Pictures to prove it, 
deer by the garage, 
moon in the branches, 
white gull right overhead 
is black against the 
still bright evening sky. 
Some things live forever. 
No, I mean things live forever.
12. Which takes us back to sandstone, anticline by Ulster’s shore. Pick at it with a fingernail, bring home a sacred relic of time itself.

13. And me such a miser—what have I ever given you but my breath and even that I have shaped and fiddled with on its way.
When Charlotte goes out to feed the birds
the deer saunter back to see what may have fallen from the feeder.
I hold on tight to this explanation.
The sky is clearing.

15.
A little song to start it
then the singers get confused, the counterpoint bewilders the chorus,
maybe the best prayer
is a gasp anyway,
sudden surprise
of being alive,
o that’s just music too.

16.
What else is out there?
Guess, don’t look.
Bluejay on the railing,
hawk in heaven. There,
I have been faithful
to all that seems.

17.
But I keep getting in the way of the little pebble of a haiku rolling to you a thousand years. Chop up my words and find the truth again.

18.
It is not easy to tell the deer from the trees in winter. Listen!

26 December 2023
Start here, let the legend inculcate its weird narrative into what I think I see. As if what is just being here is happening instead. Candlelight, roses? Women in wide-brimmed hats? Not like that. Reef off tropic coast teeming with wild life, and I for ne don’t know what all those things are called. Any good story tells itself.

27.xii.23

== == == ==
Pity me. I have one heart and way too many friends.

27.xii.23 lune
There is a rumor round here that the sky is only up so you could dig your way to another kind of heaven.

They’ve been reading Virgil, the way to heaven is underground.

Don’t believe it.

The sky is on your freckled forehead, your tousled hair.

Heaven takes care of its own.

27.xii.23
Full moon over the garage.
Sleep well, dear Subaru, the stars you name are far away, handle their own light.

Let us drowse too today or drive slow to the fabulous kingdom of nowhere.

27.xii.23
Suppose, just suppose.
Doesn’t matter what.
You might be right
and the sun will rise again.

28.xii.23
Among the Cappadocian towers
the American girl
wandered, hoping
for holiness which
for her meant the sense
of being in the right
place, right time,
ancient shadows moving
with her as she moved.

28.xii.23
Judgment, strange word as if the mind had something to do with it when it’s all only the habit of the heart.

28.xii.23
The way music encapsulates emotion, Brahms’ desperate loneliness thrashing over us like an ancient Egyptian jar cracked open, the honey in it still sweet.

28.xii.23
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Moon two days past full but something never goes away.

28.xii.23 lune
Start again,
be a star
that shrugs its shoulders
and still gives light.

Only when you have given
everything there is
will there ever be more.

28.xii.23
I am old enough
to have ridden
the trolley cars
up Nostrand Avenue,
to have seen zeppelins
over Jamaica Bay,
old enough to have seen
the moon rising
last night through bare trees.

28.xii.23
Sleep
    into the comfort
of language,
where words pool out
and shimmer
and let other words
float through

and suddenly
from our own silence
we can begin
to hear what they say.
2. Mostly I think of written words, words in alphabets, those few strong stones we build our culture on. But spoken rafters build us too.

3. It all comes true in sleep, the steps of Whitby, who will climb from the sea, who will be the next cry out Who is the next to be me?

29 December 2023
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Look past the light–there!
nothing lives
but gives life to all.

29.xii.23 lune
Someone walking on the lawn using four slim legs to do it, something waiting in the ground to spring up soon as it can. What am I doing just sitting here? I seem to have mislaid my copy of the script.

29.xii.23
Orchids pale
tall-stemmed on the table,
I swear they gave
light last night in the dark room.
They are quiet now
at morning,
pretending to be flowers.

29.xii.23
= = = = =

Watching TV
in the middle of the night
my eyes were closed
the sound was off
I had to imagine
what they were
advertising now.

30.xii.23
When the bird took off
I took off with him,
why not?

one grey haired man
is congruent with another,
grey feathered pigeon,
why not?

where we going
I said, you'll soon see
the bird replied
and so I did — down there
not grey not green not gold, nothing I
could name
the world itself,
all colors no colors,
mostly the sea, mostly the sea—
What are we doing here you're not a
sea-going bird
*I cried,*

neither are you
the pigeon said and let me go.

30 December 2023
The people who lived here before there were people left evidence abounding of their pleasures—rock strata, currents of stream and ocean, luminous symmetries children notice now and soon forget. We can read their signatures in the bark of any tree.
Machinery. One word enough to keep us going.

30.xii.23 lune
Boots. Begin.
One, two.
Enough. The rain has stopped your feet suppose. why can’t a boot go all the way up?

30.xii.23
Could this have been Katatolia, where the sun went down, the land of dreams, Niagara, Yosemite? And we came for the sake of dreams, sleep showed the way, the sea’s long restless sleep and here we are. Or here it is, and we just sparks in its meaningful dark.

30.xii.23
When I say fireplace
he writes far place...
an when I say chagrin
he writes She grinned.
And intimacy becomes
into my sea.
Sometimes a bad
secretary is a precious guide.

12.31.23
Heard the piano
pleasant contemporary
classical nothing
much going on,
opened the magazine
and the score was there,
music inspired by Anne
Sexton or composed
by the poet herself?
Print too small to tell.
Then I had to stop hearing
to explain at length
why Creeley made all
the difference, gave
us back the line, taught us to hear. I went on at some length, then woke, moved by what I’d been preaching. What did you dream about?

31 December 2023
Eating hash along the highway
I got to Wyoming.
See, I really am an American.
It’s the human part
I sometimes fret about.

31.xii.23
Countenance? Or miracle, that we are seen at all and known by what they see who look at us. Faces from old Egypt, a self persists.

31.xii.23
Resist the rest?
Detail the place.
Last day of the year—
why does a time
feel like a strange town,
full of people drunk
on numbers alone,
lights and shouts
as if someone had finally
discovered the square
root of now.

12.31.23
Sleeper wakes and wonders why, gets out of bed and nothing’s clear except sunlight in the curtain, make do with that, amigo, let it linger in your blear. Is that even a word? One more thing to worry about along the cobbled way to today.

31.XII.23
Orchestral interlude.
Nothing happening.
That’s when it really counts, starts, climaxes, ends.
Reality ends where action begins.

31,xii.23
Little people on a medium-size planet and still it matters, it matters.

31.xii.23
Whistling in the vegetables, local market, last man I heard ‘whistling as he worked; twenty years of silence ever since, just muzak and people talking and all that stuff.

31.xii.23
When I was a child
all the signs said
Do Not Touch.
Unfortunately for me
I could already read.
Behold my empty hands.

31.xii.23
Had I been born Jewish by now I would have gone at least once to Jerusalem. But i was born Catholic so went to Paris instead, Blind man singing on an empty street, woman on a bus, church on a hill. Bells. And I learned that heaven is a river.

31.xii.23