The whom and marry of the sounds I saw, rough rubbing, fabric friction, letting fall the dust of meaning.

2.
And there was more, populations magnify by night work, stones proliferate, so many people notone I knew.
3.
So I prayed
ot the way
I was taught but
the way the wind
let fall, a leaf
at least, no, a thread
of spider web
to speak to the great
seeming, mercy, y,
you are all there is.

4.
And even more.
Caves and cautions, foxfur stole, yes,
there are closets out in the wild where words mrry without consent, yes, fox. Yes, voices in the night my, in my own mouth.

5. I’m trying to say the rub, rough f eel if it, too close for comfort, some of us have wombs and some just wonder.
6.
Long enough
the robe
made of words
but who will wear
let it slither over
shoulders and confront
the luminous after all
contours of their body?
How strange we are
to walk naked in
so worded world.

7.
When looked at later
not clear if carved
on paper or typed on rock,
rough words rough edged
the coarseness of the actual
felt like truth. I see
the letters still but no words.

8.
Serenity of morning
beautiful contradiction
why can’t silence also
join our hands, make
moveless sense, blankets
flung off. magic, wren
outside window
not talking to me?
Yes, it is all a question,
surprise, no leaf stirs,
I am here to see so.

1 June 2023

[An attempt to approximate three poem-like pages/panels I wrote or read in dream, but only a few of the words came through. The rest tries to rub onto the paper some of the meaningful friction I felt.]
Ferryboat captain
a kind of prince
swimming people
back and forth,
soft confidence
of knowing that to go
is also to come back.
My first job teaching
was on Staten Island
so I know what he does.
Me, early too early
morning subway to
the Battery the ferry forty minutes to Saint George then the bus up college hill. Hours every day, never saw the captain but here I am.

1 June 2023
Opened the door.
The sudden silence caterwauled around.
Every gesture has endless aftershocks.
No end in sight to what is seen.
Look away before it takes you in.

1.VI.23
Parrot-like from New South Wales they fill an outdoor aviary in the Bronx. You can walk in and feed a thousand birds and be counseled by their agitated proximity. And maybe by their songs, that sound more like words than music. Strange things they show on the news.

1 June 2023
Milk the words
make sure
the rich thick cream
gets squeezed out of them.

2.
Let the word alone,
stand all alo/ne,
naked, shivering
as behold all its times
in it, thee wrinkles
of etymology,
scars of obsolete senses,
th wound of all its applications.
3. Then behold the glory of its triumph, it stands firm still,. Kneel down in front of it, pray to it, bed it to carry the slippery load of your momentary whim.

4. How old are you, young miss, young sir? Where did yu first catch sight of me? Those are the questions the word will ask
of your hearing is honest. Try to be aware of all the years the word has been waiting for you.

5. Now if all went well you can use the word in your lobe letter, poem, essay, book review, address to the graduates, Sunday sermon, diary, job interview, confession.

6.
A therapist stares at you across their crowded desk and asks severely: Is that really what you mean? You shake that image out of mind and sit wondering what word you mean, what word will let you mean all your breath is shouting to say.

7.
Say to the word what Sappho said to th Goddess:
Be with me,
fight at my side.
Far ahead you see
light from the clearing coming through the trees.

2 June 2023
Turn the page.
What you have written in ink soaks through and on the verso page looks Arabish, spiralling right to left along the lines.

I have forgotten my high school Arabic, so all I’m left with is resemblances. Which itself is pretty much all anybody has to go on. I stare at the scrawl, imagine a kindly reader who could
make sense of this,
read me the holy opposite
of what I thought I said.

2 June 2023
So it’s all about recognition, convergences of signs, undersea currents of meaning. Why isn’t it just about roses, just about you?

2 June 2023
Twice I hurt a tree.  
Once with hands, 
once with a car. 
The guilt lingers 
after the wounds heal. 
I llok in the mirror and ask 
What are you telling me now?

2.VI.23
All I ask you is
talk to me,
let silence speak too.

2.VI.23, lune
I used to use it
but now they’ve stopped
making it,

I tend to forget
even what is as called,
something with sound,
melodies maybe?

Many voices
many instruments
moving forward together.

Or maybe sideways. Or maybe
I dreamed the whole thing,
like a Czech Jew writing
Chinese songs in Vienne, no very likely. But still I her something deep in memory, something like music.

2 June 2023
Infrastructure needed to keep the outside out there, not let it twirl back in and shock us with the vast solemnity of the task we accepted by being born here and now.

Let us stay busy snug in the minute details of our work and worship, that ancient religion we still call playing, rhyme with praying. Ony in dream
sometimes see the grandeur of the exterior, steps rising to the temple.

2 June 2023
ANNIVERSARY

for Charlotte all my love

Loving Marxist skeptic
father in the corner
on a wicker chair,
mother on the sofa
alert to all the meanings
people generate together,
liberal kindly Methodist
preacher werng as sole sign
of his office a stole made
by Meso-american natives,
with their signs along
with Christian marks.
He stands in the middle of the living room in front of two would-be Buddhists getting married. Because love told them to, and love could make itself heard even through the din of symbols and theories, attitudes, energies. Because love is indigenous, at home in every sort of settlement of those who dare to venture into the forest of otherness where Other People live. Where you live, love of my life, a life you gave me, give me
with your quiet yesses
to the preacher’s questions,
a soft word that slices through
all ritual and legal pomp
and when we hear it, repeat it,
then at last we really are.

2.
I’m saying a little scene of it,
accurate but not complete.
The story continues long after
relatives and clergy have gone
about their elsewhere businesses
but we are left to give each day
knowing, vaguely at first, that all
things are different now. Maybe
we don’t become *unum caro* as the Romans say, one flesh, but we are an interwoven story, a narrative with surprises every blessed morning needs the tenderest analysis.

3. The only sadness in the story is my strong feeling that I have given you far less than you have given me in these thirty years of marriage, mainland and island, river and ocean, Alps and India and Donegal. And home. All those goings
culminate in you. And I give you poems and little bits of thing, I’m bad at giving, I try to learn from you, who have given me 30 years of meaning, I mean life

3 June 2023
HEARD IN PARKING LOTS

Mocking bird by Target in a tree, impersonating plausibly wren and cardinal ad chickadees. Then half a mile south in a smaller tree local flock of sparrows eagerly discussing the news., shout headlines to each other. Last by Beer World fortyish. uneducated playful male cried “O I know! Very nice, very kind, jery everything!”

I wait in the cool evening air.

3 June 2023
THE STANDARD
When the ball approaches, smite it hard or soft, in hopes it will find a place to fall where no one is there to deal with it maybe even over the wall. Now think or speak a thing so quickly that no one is ready to catch it in the well-worn glove of the familiar. Maybe it will leap oy of the system and leave you with excitement as if by going so far outside you had suddenly come home.

3 June 2023
See? The roof is wet, the sky is grey. We guess what happened but can’t intuit what comes next. There are people who profess to know but I’m not one of them, at least not today. I’ve got more important things to do than measuring.

3.VI.23
Sleep is a mandala,
the images unfold
around a hidden core
and fill all space
with faces or whole persons
you have never seen.
Colors vivid, intimate.
Your breath makes all
the music there is.

3 June 223
Think further, further,  
sleep beneath  
thought’s parabola.

3.VI.23 lune
In Venice we took
the vaporetto
not the gondola.
There’s a limit to
how far back in time
I’m willing to travel.
Domani, domani
I live for tomorrow.

3 June 2023
Any minute now someone will come walking out of the woods on four legs, or two but with wings. And I will try to ask the right question this time, something more; like “Who am I?” than Who are you?

3 June 2023
Next time you go to a Catholic Mass watch the altar closely while the priest is saying all those words that year after year become more and more his own, own enough for him to give them out, give them to us, for us. But what is the altar doing while he speaks. Candles flicker as usual, but study the light on the middle, the white cloth that’s meant
to cover and reveal at once the central stone, the real place where the action is. They even call it action though you must look very carefully, alertly, to watch how the light behaves. What you see you’ll see then not by eyesight but the view inside you, the feeling knowing, action of the hidden heart.

3 June 2023
The spire of darkness
angle light up there
moon full in Sagittarius
where I was born to keep
my Mars, wait, sounds wrong,
Mars keeps me, Mavors,
energy of out thrust,
moreword than sword.
Full moon in June and
I love you. That’s
what I was trying to say.

3 June 2023
it said
the skiff that sails
through the depths of the sea
I said, is that right?

Dream is all about translation,
every night a final exam.
Yes, that kind of vessel,
the name’s a little joke
like so much science,

but I don’t think the sea minds
as much as you do. Who are you
to know so much about me?
You dreamed me into place
and now you’re stuck with me
and my wisdom one whole day.

4 June 2023
Geolatry
I mean,
worship of the earth.
Not the whole
earth at once,
too big for me,
and I’ve forgotten
my semester of Chinese.
Just here and now,
wherever here may be,
the place, the place,
the place I am! Once
a gret Lama we sked
where the bird feeder
should stand in the yard
stared up into the empty sky,
found something, pointed to it
then drew his finger down
to one spot. The birds
are still abundant there.
nd crowd keep watch.
Or the other day we sat
by the river beneath
a cottonwood tree and it all
was an Anglican Mass
with music by Tallis and Byrd
and the river worshipped too. How
good the ground is
to us, and the stone
that helps you find exactly
where here is, where have you
gotten to now, what part
of the temple, what liturgy
is going om beneath the trains nd
sirens and doors slamming,
pryaing to the earth is not
just praying for help, it’s mainly
singing thanks for our being here

4 June 2023
Most days dawn lingers
but Sundays noon comes sooner,
tie eager for summit so
after it all the light and life can
relax. Time is a hammock
my friend tells me
not in so many words
from her home by the sea.

4 June 2023
Lightweight liberties suffice for now. Sit or stand, deck or dining room, sonatas or silence. How free we seem! But we spend so much of what we are in picking and choosing. Only the weather decides all by itself.
TEACHER
Sometimes I’d sit
in the classroom quiet
while the sophomores
and juniors were busy
at a writing exercise,
fifteen people, and I’d suddenly
realize that in front of me
three hundred years of human
experience lived and breathed and
ready to speak, yet
here I was with my few
score years daring to profess to guide
people who know
five times more than I do.
They have read more books,
been to more places, speak more languages, learned to sing more songs, walked more beaches and mountains and vales, played more games, seen more films, and have already more friends. Yet here I sit, at least decently mute for a minute, while they scribble inward obediently, some even smiling. Education is such a strange something—arrogance, a trick? All I hope for is to help them learn what they already know.

4 June 2023
Rain would be rapture, all over everything all at once, would be baptism and chrism, rain would be music enough for a whole afternoon, the beat of it, the solfege, the pizzicati on the rooftop, o rain wash indifference away, rain we’d pay attention to, dress for the occasion, shiver with a we at its thoroughness. Rain drenches us with reward.

4 June 2023
When you press your ear against someone’s chest what you hear is a heart. Words are so kind, they tell heart is what is heard, heart is what we have to learn to hear. Sudden we just know that.

4.VI.23
This road running through trees when I close my eyes becomes a river on a topographic map running south between green lawlands, meadows. Land and water make up my ind for me, see all I like, the main thing is going.

4.VI.23
I’m happier than I feel, I’m willing to admit.

4.VI.23 lune
Mercury in the little tube
clubs high in summer.
He wants the Sun of course,
we all want Het, and the gods
of course want each other,
fellow citizens of glory,
mystery, otherness and truth.
That’s what thermometers tell.

5 June 2023
Sometimes you wake to hear a camel caravan suffling and coughing past your grey New England window. Then you know they’ve gotten it wrong again pr you have, so decide to go backto sleep and try for something more plausible. finches chattering, say, or that neighbor on her Harley, or hear the crumpled pillow whisper back your own breath.

5 June 2023
Everything tends to forget, so we need so many.

5.VI.23, lune
It’s time now for Vermeer
to climb up the brick wall
deep in quiet Brooklyn

and from the outside this time
paint one more haunting image
of a woman, seen through
her window, as she bends
to light a scented candle or
put a vinyl record on or lift
her cellphone so its pal screen
brings another wedge of light
to meet her, mark her,
organdy curtains flutter between the painter and what he and only he cn see. It is time for us to see from the outside in.

5 June 2023
Imagine you found a shiny stone that looks like forest all shadow and green. You put it in your pocket and curry it home. Next day you rest it on the table and consider. This stone found me, you think, it must men something. Or is it just remembering me from before when we were both birds in the sky together. or trees on the minister’s lawn? Make up some more supposes,
drip drop of water on the tone and see it shine. A change in light is always a message. You have all morning free to listen to the growing stone.

5 June 2023
Just settle down
and watch the mushrooms grow
while the teacher
taks to the tree. The forest,
like any dream, takes its time.
Rest by th roots, rest
among them, green sisters,
brown brothers, waking
is too easy. Any minute now
the teacher will come back
and tel you at least some
of what he’s learned.
Good teachers learn from everyone.

6 June 2023
I touched the empty glass vase left in gazy moonlight on the rail and suddenly felt the flesh of all the flowers it had held just a few days before, each petal was fresh and soft, skin on my skin, and my fingertips could somehow read the colors of the tiger lilies and freesias. Friends send more than they know when they send flowers.

6 June 2023
The flowers had been ordered from Britain, the flowers had grown up here. Sounds like me a little, doesn’t it, genetics is such an intricate music, never can tell when you’ll start hearing it sing

6 June 2023
CONFESSION

for MLZ w/ thanks

I was living with a girl who ate eggs. She was nice enough otherwise, though she did weird things with her hair. I always woke up first, I always do, and I’d go into the kitchen and stare at her white and brown things in the fridge, wondering. I didn’t grow up with chickens, though ducks, wild ones, often swam close on our little pond. But here were the eggs—o neat in their carton, that neatness a
little scary in all the pleasant chaos in the fridge. Eggs.

Early one morning I took a brown one out, and with a magic-marker made an X on the pointy end, then ut it back. That day nothing came of it, but the next morning as I sat at the table with my hummus and crisps I looked up and found her staring at something in her hand. It was the egg. She held it up to the light, sniffed it, rolled it gently, tried to rub the X off. I was waiting for her to ask Did you do this? Butche never did. She put the egg back and took out
another, sit it to boil and thereafter everything went all normal again.

Two days later the mystery egg was still there. Then one morning it was the only one. My friend came in and took it up, said What the —-! ad put the egg into the pan, ran water onto it, rubbed the X a kittle, poured the water off, poured in fresh and set it on the burner. She usually ate a six-minute egg, she called it mezzo-mezzo, but today she boiled in ten full minutes, I guess for safety’s sake. She peeled it as she often did under cold water dribbling from the faucet. Sat down ten, two slices of toast to
build her confidence, sliced the egg, salted it, peppered it, maybe a little more than usual. Sighed. Ate the egg and buttery toast and drank her tea.

Everything went well. she read her e-mail and I read mine. I wanted to ask her how the egg went down, but that might make her suspect my role in this breakfast drama, so I stayed with the news. Wars here and there. Het face thoughtful, alert to any strangeness in what she had just eaten. I was about to ask How as the egg? then I realized that she knew I am a vegetarian, and have any
interest in eggs. I did lEEP an eye on her. Soon she wore her normal face again, and went on about a postcard from a boy traveling in Slovenia, so we talked about that. It showed a bridge with dragons on it.

6 June 2023
Mysterious amplification
the kitchen clock sounds
midnight with wild finches.
Or all they always like that,
eager to speak and sing and
whatever else it is that sounds
can do. I think we’re only
at the start of what we know
about what we whar. Finches.
Time to wash the dishes,
time to head for bed.

6.VI.23
PIRATES ATE PICKLES

hey keep well at sea. At least that’s what a seagull once told me. And I lwys believe a bird, even one my birder friend tells me doesn’t exist: there’s herring gulls and ring-neck gulls nut no such thing as a sea-gull.

I stand on the deck and smile at the ones beside me, tey smile back by flying away.

6 June 2023
I cup my palms gently over my tired eyes as I have been taught to do. What is this smell on my skin? Could this be me?

6.VI.23
UNDER THE HAZE

The sir is full of haze. smell of Canada’s fires. The first thing I remember is the church across the street burning down. Was that a sign of the faltering of religion in our night of digital deity? Or are we all of us the church dreading the forest fire to come.

7.VI.23
Shaking the pain out of the bone,
shaking the fear out of the brain,
get up and walk around,
it can’t be worse out there than in my head.
Think the sky, think for rain.

7 June 2023
Does who know what we really think of whom?

How little of what we feel needs to speak.

Don’t tell—telling ends the tale.

7.VI.23
You don’t have to know what I’m thinking. I don’t even have to think it. Let’s call the whole thing off.

7.VI.23
AN ANXIETY

Does the way we think about people in any way affect what they do?

Are our actions unconscious responses to other people’s thoughts about us?

I’m not after paranoia here, I demand a serious study of unconscious unintentional telepathic control.
Do we do what we do because someone else is thinking of us doing that or something like it?

Hurry up and answer me—
I’m waiting. I mean thinking.

7.VI.23
He stands on a something like a surfboard, paddles it through the harbor, dodging moorings and skiffs. A name exists for what he’s doing and what he’s doing it on but I forget. I see a man walking on water, without even moving his legs. No one watches him, he’s one more visitor enjoying himself. But does he have a self to enjoy?
Something solemn about him, his smile-less face, only the arms moving, calm as can be. Why do people keep reminding me of what we long ago forgot?

7 June 2023
have to do something about the me, the worrier beneath the blanket of identity.

Who cares what they say I am, I tremble, try to go blank inside.

Sometimes in clean moments I memorize the other side of being anyone at all,
the sheer delight
of light and sound and
being, being with no
going and there I am,
the other side of me.

8.VI.23
Off to the sea,
the other side
of each of us.
Shore suffices
but sometimes a boat
makes it, more so,
who we are cruising
easy over what we were,
now reading this letter
from a long lost friend.

8 June 2023
Exasperate the magistrate, use broken English use lots of gestures with your clumsy hands. You’re juts a witness here, you’re not on trial. What he thinks you’re trying to say will get written own in a document you’ll never get to read. Use your hands a lot—the clerk can hardly spell them.

8 June 2023
It has to be more than an orange rolled down the spine to bounce off the tailbone so the audience clapped its dozen hands and all the rest of the bar kept busy with what passed for pleasure in those days, smoke, jukebox, squeals of laughter. There must be more to memory than that.

8 June 2023
Let the valve of the morning be opened, and this new fluid, who knows what it is, flow out and bathe the light. Something is always. Seems safe to say but then the trees frown a little, they tell us to be beautiful if we’re obvious, otherwise hide awat within the chambers f ambiguity. I hear them. I only jope it’s them I hear. Who not? The light keeps increasing.

9 June 2023
Painting, Monet I’m sure, two women in gathering flowers in a complex garden. Saw it clearly, the infinity of tiny colors, the women bending. I was trying to get bcl to sleep but the flowers were too bright.

9 June 2023
Donors all round us, 
the air is still. 
This is religion, 
we learned it from islands 
before we dared 
to come ashore and graze 
among the mountains. 
And then the rock reminded. 

9 June 2023