

6-2023

## June 2023

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**= = = = =**

**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 love 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 look 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 wearing 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  
whcomes next.  
There are people who  
profess to know  
but I'm not one of them,  
at least not today.  
I've gt 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



## BATHYSCAPH

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 ;itt;e 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.  
and 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 on beneath the trains and  
sirens and doors slamming,  
praying 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 wether  
decides all by itself.**

**4 June 2023**

## **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  
redy 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, othernes 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 carry it home. Next day  
you rest it on the table  
and consider. This stone  
found me, you think, it must  
mean 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 put 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? But she 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. Her face thoughtful, alert to any strangeness in what she had just eaten. I was about to ask How was 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 m y 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 air 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 away within  
the chambers of ambiguity.  
I hear them. I only hope  
it's them I hear. Who not?  
The light keeps increasing.

*9 June 2023*

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**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**

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

**9 June 2023**





