

7-2023

July 2023

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**So the rabbit has spoken,
the month begins.**

**Footnote: in Kentucky
when we wake in the morning
on the first day of the month
we say Rabbit, rabbit.**

**But we are not in Kentucky now,
we're just barely in America,
that vague low land we see
far to the west in haze,
seafog, smoke from Canadian
fires, but there it is
and here we are,
so rabbit, rabbit.**

2.

But I haven't seen a rabbit
this year, used to be common,
I think all the disruption
of roads and hedges, paving
and trenching and burrowing
by much bigger beings has
slowed them down. No fur
for most of a month, no
ears longer than mine.

3.

Warm sun in cool breeze,
that seaside cocktail.
Snuff. They speak of vacation
but it's a different kind of work—
what you most want to do,

**do it harder and longer here,
you can see it clearly all round,
surfers weary from balancing,
fishermen schlepping gear uphill,
and even sleep can be a vocation,
earn a Ph.D. in dream evasion.**

4.

**From the hilltop I see America,
that sobers me up,
three hundred million people
waiting for the next words
from my mouth, and they don't
even know it, no more than I do.
Being born into language
means you have to talk to
everyone.**

**5.
So rabbit, rabbit
to the waking world,
lift your deep ears,
I'm on an island,
help me to listen.**

1 July 2023

= = = = =

**Two hundred insurance men
all in black suits
only faces and neckties different
come slowly out of a hotel
where they conferenced,
and they're crossing this
very wide avenue this way
while I'm trying to cross
to the row of shops alongside
the place from which they come.
There's a pothole in the asphalt,
what happens now? Do I fall?
Unknown city, mend your skin!**

1.VII.23

= = = = =

**What city should I pretend
to be living in today?**

**The fog makes many possibilities,
Delhi, London, Venice, Seattle,
romance, technology, authority.
Can't help it, woke with cities
in mind, the ones I've lived in,
spent time in, passed through
quickly on my way *to somewhere
else*, that shimmering paradise.**

2.

**What do you do
with the names
in your head?
Cities strange enough**

but men and women too,
the ones you know
or knew or loved or
met for ten minutes
at some glum parade,
and then the names
you never knew live
bearers of, awkward,
names without faces
clamoring for love.

3.

Nomina numina
our teachers said,
names are powers,
deities, potentates,
who really knows
what *numen* means,

**sounds like *nomen*
which just means name.
We still interpret it to mean
knowing a person's name
gives some power over them.
Does that work
for cities and rivers too?**

4.

**So I was born on Paumanok
and live beside the Mahicanuk
but I'm on an island now,
I wait to dream its ancient name.**

2 July 2023

= = = = =

**Meniscus,
curve of self
a thrust up
against the weight
of other.**

2.

**Saw it first
in a well in the White Mountains
or on a glass of milk
on Brown Street
fresh from the icebox
we still had.**

3.

No, wait–

it was later, time
has its curved surface too.

I need you, I need you

I cry and the words slide
in all directions down
from my gasp. Anybody
might hear them–that
is my plan. A willing world
broadcasts gladly
any message we dare to speak.
and clarity comes
gleaming through the fog.

2 July 2023

= == = =

**Hard to see the animal I am
but when you look at me
the stripes shine out.
We are what we are
because others see us so—
what purpose could I serve
if I were just being me?
Me in a little boy naked
sitting on a rock in the stream
watching a bright blue
kingfisher dive straight
down into the water.
Everything else is you, and you.**

2 July 2023

= = = = =

**Islands come and go
in the fog, even my hand
looks vague when I stare
out at where the sea must be.
Senses quiver, rely not
on them, this atmospheric
opium softly wipes away the real.**

2 July 2023

FUNDRAISER

**Pretend to be living
by giving.**

**You feel better
for having lesser.**

**Charity, after all,
is from the old
word for love.**

3.VII.23

= = = = =

**Woke up cynical
like sunshine in the mist.
Listened to the radio
in my head, what I heard
last night when you
miraculously played all
the mystery sonatas of Biber
and I went from one chamber
to the next, almost breathless
and now I get to remember
that passage through this
mythology in which I was born.
Violin and continuo. It takes
two voices to say the truth.**

3 July 2023

BREAD

**Walk from the market
carrying a loaf.**

It means everything.

**What you eat and what you give
to strangers, and use
to represent the right now
right here presence of God
or offer crumbs to pigeons,
or take from the oyster
and look in vain for jam.**

2.

**Carrying bread home
is the whole story.**

**Dürer's self-portrait
as a naked young man**

**has no time in it
but the present. The bread
is always now.
Even the stale matzos
from on top of the fridge
crunch in my teeth
with the intense immediacy
of finches, house and gold,
chattering by the window.
Birds are always now
and so is bread, no wonder
Christians see as they do
the Holy Spirit and the Eucharist.**

3.

**But I was walking home
from market when this began.**

**A town in France far south,
I had the feeling I could be
anybody at all. The loaf
at my elbow was all
the identity I had to have.
I was a child of bread
and nothing more.**

4.

**If I were sitting with Olson now
again by this very sea
I would be trying to persuade him
suddenly that the West
is Bread, and all the ancient way
from Iceland to Ethiopia and
India
was the Bread World, but East**

of that they knew no bread.
That is the difference, Charles,
Confucius never ate a slice of
bread,
Lord Jesus never tasted rice,
capisce?
Too neat too simple too polar
he'd explain, but in his eyes
I would see a gleam of Yes!
since he's an old Swede himself
and can't know deeply
more than his body knows.
It's a long time since we had a
chance to talk.

3 July 2023

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**Bright enough
but mist insists.**

**The dove on the deck
seems content
with what he finds there.**

**Then sparrow, goldfinch,
blackbird, all quiet.**

**I'm the only one making noise,
fingers on laptop, breath.
Then a little guess of wind
whispers by me. Believe
the wind. Silence**

July 2023 **20**

**is not the only bible.
But this quiet morning
the birds are good preachers of it.**

3 July2023

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**Just because something
was a long time ago
doesn't mean it isn't now.
Now has long arms.**

3.VII.23

= = = = =

**I guess my love of fog
makes me a heretic.
It wouldn't be the only
evidence of my errors
but it will serve. I contend
that mist outside means
clarity within, the mind
by instinct rinses itself clean
when it sees outside
everything losing clarity.
But I am clear! the mind cries
at least I think I hear it.
It can't be the fog talking, can it?**

3.VII.23

= = = = =

**Watch what's next,
a cougar prancing
through Oregon.
Black bear on lawn
not far from New York.**

**As the Welshman pointed out
years ago they all come back,
the beast we be will always be us.**

**Machen called it the Return.
I think I'd say it never left
but I'm not sure.**

**The fear
I've carried with me all my life**

**must mean something,
the footsteps I hear
padding ever closer.**

3.VII.23

= = = = =

**Hold back the milk
till the calf is ready to drink,
bring the sun with you
on the way to the beach.
But some things are always
ready.
Some things wipe your brow
or gently stroke your hand.
The child will cry when hungry—
that is all you have to know.**

3 July 2023

= = = = =

There is a way of getting there,
 climb over the golden pipe,
 rest on it a few minutes
 if you like, time is cheap
 in this sort of instruction,
 then slip off and keep going
 barefoot in the marsh,
 the rest of you in tight clothes.
 Mercyville across the stream—
 wade there, the water's cold
 but only a few inches deep.
 Your cuffs will dry soon enough
 in that dry place, little wind,
 warm air at peace. The rule is:
 knock on the first door you find,

address with some formality
whoever it is that opens the door.
Let your speech tell of your
journey,
the stones you've sat on,
the rains that wet your cheeks,
the bird songs you imitate
doesn't matter if not too well.
When you've finished, expect
to be invited in, or told another
door
that suits your entrance better.
It won't be far away, not now
when so much is already known.

3 July 2023

= = = = =

**The host is flying
a kite on the lawn.
Ask the hostess
for a cigarette-
cheap in this country-
and tuck it behind your ear.
Never can tell when
you might have to breathe again.**

3.VII.23

= = = = =

**I still keep some habits
from the old country
I have never visited,
never even seen on the horizon.
But the habits
walk across the sea
and comfort me.
I smile at moonlight
and delight in fog,
eat breakfast late, skip lunch,
write my letters backwards
ad send them to myself
to learn what I have on my mind.**

3.VII.23

= = = = =

1.

**The darker the dream
the louder the names.
I mean the room,
the penetration of silence
by the names of
who are all these people?**

2.

**I love you too, I sing,
and you and you
and who you are
is supposed to love me,
that's what names are for,**

**isn't it, or am I wrong
or am I too afraid
to love anybody out loud?**

3.

**But when he said it
it came out a song.
Music bewilders me
she answered, there's
always so much of it,
try to be simple, try
silence, silence caress.**

4.

**That's as far as penetration
went that time, they shook
their heads in heaven, resolved**

**to try again. Listen, listen
they whispered, and down here
we tried again. I spoke
a name into the dark.**

4 July 2023

= = = = =

**Maybe change all the numbers
and start again. We can call this 7
for the sisters in the sky
and then go backwards
all the way to 1, then see
what happens.**

**I was good at math in school
but now think it would greater
to do math without the numbers,
just the meanings tugging
each other's hair or caressing
their implicit qualities,
quantities,
I deny the difference.
So no 7 after all.**

**Just some lights in the sky,
girls on the beach,
oak trees teaching children
Greek.**

**I was there, famous in my day,
the shepherd with no sheep,
harper with the stringless lyre–
believe me, you can hear me still.**

4 July 2023

= = = = =

Stationary maneuvers.

**How do you spell 'me'
when you're in disguise?**

**It's supposed to be a holiday
but uncertainties, those
pretty little songs that linger
so long, they keep humming by,
these questions.**

**Fascinations
of the open door, the blinking
eye,
the sea-washed rocky shore**

**between sleep and waking,
When you look at the word
you'd think maneuver
means 'the work of the hand'
and sometimes the hand
wants to wave everything away.**

4 July 2023

SHELTER

At that time I was a cat. Tortoise shell mottled, a bit old for my years, a little cranky. You know how we get. But I adhered closely to our Code of Behavior, and though there none of our kind nearby I still behaved properly as every cat should.

One day we were in the garden, early summer, very bright sun. My Responsibility was resting sideways on the bench, her shoulders pillowed against an armrest, her legs arched along the bench. She was happily

chatting with her cell phone. She talks to it in a much quieter voice than she uses with me, I suppose because it's such a small device.

I was finding the sun a little oppressive. I noted that my Responsibility's upraised knees formed a cave-like shadowy space, shielded by the flowing skirt and her legs themselves, so I hopped up into the shadow.

My tail must have brushed against the underside of her bare thighs, it must have tickled because she twitched, and giggled into the phone, and abruptly stretched her legs out and down,

crashing down on me so I leapt back down into sunlight on the ground, feeling misunderstood. Now she was lying flat, straight out, no more chance of shelter. I rested there a while, thinking about the strange reaction of her skin to mine—it must be hard for them, bare skin, no fur to cushion blows or nestle in. Poor people. They have lots going for them, but still it's sad to think of how they have to keep wearing clothes to shield themselves. I felt a little sorry for her, so I jumped up and lay on her belly, the way she likes, and stared at her with wide-open

eyes. That made her happy. I felt forgiven, all the more so when she lay the cellphone down and folded her hands over me, smiling and making sounds. So I had a little arch over me after all, though it didn't do much to keep the sunshine off. As usual, my fur had to take care of that.

4 July 2023

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**Then the power came back,
swimmers in the channel,
a guy on paddleboard
snaking through the sailboats.
For it was day, and people
do what they do.**

**Choose
your cards carefully, the game
may last for years,
old Chinese
poets rest by moonlit stream,
writing words on paper, maybe,
or maybe sheets of pure light.**

Then begin again. The boats

**have mostly sailed back home,
holiday is over flags furled,
sails spread, you know how it is,
things end, swimmers dry now,
toes snug in warm socks.**

**The words
glisten on the sheets, I can't
read them though I studied
moonlight once, wrote a book
the alphabet of silence, a cat
asleep, a disappointed scientist,
priests in love. I forget the rest.**

4 July 2023

AIRPLANE OVER

**Can't see in fog
where sky must be.
Eyes follow sound
through invisibility.**

2.

**I can't help it
I just woke up
have nothing else
to report but this,
absent the dream.**

3.

The city as usual

**was broad and bright,
vast avenues, mild
traffic, monuments galore.
Had no phone with me
so had to walk, at times
it takes three chapters
to cross one boulevard.**

**4.
So don't go there,
unease trebling
almost at the gate of fear.
At least daylight.
Then and now. O now
is a comforting theology.**

5 Julyn2023

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**No fireworks at all
on the Fourth
but very heavy thunder.
Heaven celebrating for us
or was it Muslim magic?
The lights went out
all over the island
but soon came back
anxiety slow o seep away.**

5.VII.23

= = = = =

If it were another year than this
my Latin accent might be better,
folk music might even still be
songs people sing themselves.
And Vienna full of cellos
and no words to be heard
except what someone says
right now, to you or me
standing close enough to hear.
My father, born in New York,
was a teenager before he ever
heard
a word spoken by someone not
there
and one day heard Caruso

**singing in the park
to him and ten thousand others
but they all were there.
Now there is somewhere else,
and here is anywhere you are.
I brush up on the fifth declension
and go back to sleep.**

5 July 2023

= = = = =

**By one theory
I chose all this.
Call it religion
and go for a swim.**

5.VII.23

= = = = =

The centerpiece
or someone like her
unfolds across the bay,
his wife in the Oakland window
a little scratch of fog
sun straight overhead.

2.

Miles ago, you understand,
nothing now
about this image. Windows
no more of glass,
grass grows on the moon—
I read that somewhere
or was it you?

3.

**It was even before the subway
and spoke Japanese.**

**Wandered up the long street
at right angles to sunset.**

**In those days I still believed
music, still read slim books
lusting for sisterhood
she said. I stood behind her
in case she lost her balance,
bodies are a huge responsibilities
cavernous metaphors
sunbeams you can actually hold.**

5 July 2023

= = = = =

**The outer dry
the inmost soaked,
glad mercies
of Norwegian music,
the blond stone on the shore,
hearken, o heathen!
this is all about water,
the part of your blood
you can't make by yourself.**

2.

**And so the sea said
and so we voyaged
from tub to faucet
over the bounding sea.**

3.

**The doctors summer in Sargasso
hopping in and out
of all their little skiffs.
Hydrate, hydrate! they cry out,
get to the bottom of this!**

4.

**In cooler blood
on Scottish isles
long-haired weavers
learn how to mingle
ocean air with wool
so now they cry
you will never be dry.**

5.

Now the sea fog
shawls all round me
and it is good.

Sun seeps through
so some colors linger,
softly to confuse.

I tell you plainly
what I woke to find—
the dreams washed away
like good dreams do.

6 July 2023

= = = = =

**Old iron-bound chest
simmers in the sealed attic.
No way to go there,
no need to open
what someone else's years
have closed and put aside.
Not away. There is no way
for things to really go away.**

6 July 2023

= = = = =

**The wonder of it
is that the sea
speaks always
the same language.**

**Whether on the coast
of Oregon or Rockaway,
Galway, Venice, the Persian Gulf
you can always understand
every word the sea is saying.**

**Of course it says different things
in different places, true
to the surface, true to the depths,
but we can always understand**

**whatever it is the sea is saying.
Because its grammar is ours too,
rooted in blood and nerve,
all the shifting flood we share,
the inmost ocean that we are.**

6 July 2023

= = = = =

**Pour it out of the dream
mix it with the alphabet,
write it down to make it true.**

7.VII.23

= = = = =

**People walking in dense fog
are trying to be figures
moving through your mind,
bidding you make something
of them, identity, purpose,
what they're really up to
and by now they've passed
and you never saw their faces.
So important to distinguish
inside from outside, even if
you can't always manage it.**

7 July 2023

= = = = =

**Look for the law
find it where
it slipped down
into the upholstery,
brush it off,
dog hair on it
or is that spider web.
Hard to read the words,
get better light, being legal
is a complex game–
now figure out what
they really meant when
they long ago wrote this.**

7 July 2023

= = = = =

**I'm assuming it's comfortable
for birds to float through fog,
a little more something under
and around them, I'm assuming
we all feel deeply the medium
through which we move. Even
my hand feels lighter as it lifts
to wave at a neighbor in the fog.**

7 July 2023

IN ISLAND FOG

1.

So many days of fog
and no foghorns heard.
No ships? Little sailboats
sneaking through weather?
Fog is lifting now, already
I can almost make out
the coast a mile away—
I'd better start writing fast
to get it down before it goes away.

2.

Once in the foothills
of the Himalayas
I was standing admiring

**the dense summer morning fog.
Lama Norlha beside me
chided me, warily, make sure
he said you keep the fog outside.**

**3.
Keep the mind clear,
yes. But every oddity
of weather is a jolt
to wake the mind, bring it
back to now, the eternal
present they say the only
place we actually live.**

4.

But while I was writing
the fog deepened again,
the other island gone again,
now is doing its little dance,
a girl I met at a party, a few
smiling words, no names.

5.

The child tossed the cat
impatiently onto the rug
and asked his mother
how long does now last.
The cat was used to this,
the mother not so much.
I want something to happen,

**nothing ever happens now.
True enough, she thought,
with deep contentment.**

6.

**And then the sun came out!
everything changed!
I'm telling what happened,
it's what I always do,
the fog is warmer, brighter,
but just as veiling as before.
Weather is the ancient
epic we are doomed to write.**

7.

Because it happens in us,

**Lama was right to warn me,
so many of us suck sunshine in,
whistle the wind up, pray
to moonlight, ivory dawns,
golden gloamings, each day
an endless lesson in taking in,
being there, while we idly
suppose we're working or playing
when all the while we weather.**

8.

**Sun less now.
This vista
won't leave me alone,
sea seen
over a few housetops,
sea seen,**

sea seen

**And that is why I'm here
to behold the original water
and say what comes to mind.
Everything else is just television.**

9.

**This island
which is sprightly Massachusetts
used to belong to New York.
Fact. The rock itself
is part of the same glacial ridge
as Long Island, where I was born.
Two senses of being at home—
but beware, this is the fog
creeping into the mind,
drifting me back to this**

life I think I've lived, this
self I think I am. No, no,
it's time to cry, be out there,
out there where now lasts forever
and the sea is calm.
I can barely hear it lapping
down the hill in kindly fog.

10.

This island shaped like a bird
my island shaped like a fish—
I grew up by the lower jaw.
But the fog has no shape at all
except what we give it.
Fish or bird or the old wooden
house across the street.
I'm fishing for meaning—

**it's what you do in a fog,
the fog called college,
the fog called church, move
through so easily, find
by feel, see by remembering.
I'm losing the tune here, wait,
the fog's unchanging, a big
blackbird just soared
low past the window.
Or grackle. Hard to tell in fog.**

7 July 2023

= = = = =

**Why don't they re-
member me, piece
me back together
in their minds**

**he
asked out loud all
alone on the lawn
speaking of no one
in particular, all
hope in the healing word.**

8 July 2023

HIS DAY

**My graceful kindly father
was born 123 years ago
today. Victoria was still
on her throne, Empress
still of India where his
grandfather had vanished
during our Civil War.**

**You can see I'm drenched
with history, but I think
his grace goes on and on,
incarnate now in some new
young man whose wife
has just given birth to some
later, better, version of me.**

The last time my mother and he
came upstate for a visit
we stood one day in an empty
church – abandoned now, then
still open – and he climbed
up into the choir loft and sang
in his precise Irish tenor
Mother Machree, a secular
song for him holier than hymns,
full of mother-love and gratitude
as I'm sure the altar understood.

His voice clear as opera.
his offering to God and to us all,
thirty-three years later I still
feel the kindness of him,

**hear the tones of his voice,
the words vanish but the vowels
linger in the empty church of
after days, I wonder where
his soul is busy now.
Yes, I know I have said
all this before—and you
can be sure I'll sing it again.**

8 July 2023

OUT TIME

**Now it's out time
where the osprey sails
and what am I doing
shaded from such sun?**

**Out is our battlefield
our Eldorado our Jerusalem,
out is Gary on his fire tower,
Paul lusting through Toulouse,
out is Charlotte in Tsopema,**

**out is walking down the street,
the sun a sweet siren sounded,
Few sails on the Sound. Morning**

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**ferry has come, unloaded,
sleeps by its dock and who am I?
Sun on the deck, icing on the cake.**

8 July 2023

ANNALS OF ANXIETY

**We ask the internet for news
a voice gives yesterday's.
We ask again, today's news,
the latest news, whatever
the government lets us hear,
but a cushy voice whispers
BBC from the day before.
What is going on? Where
have they hidden now now,
and why? Clear, no fog to blame.**

8 July 2023

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**The insurance man
used to come from door to door
collecting the week's premium
or was it month's, me too young
to understand, money happens,
in coin often, and he polite,
a quiet, pleasant man,
tired-looking in his grey suit.
Slips of yellow paper
passed back and forth.**

**As the war wore on
he stopped coming, some
other way of paying our bills.
I wonder where he went,**

**the poor guy dressed for office
but going from house to house
in that middle-class wilderness,
Marine Park, Gerritsen Beach.
Money was different those days,
you actually felt it in your hands.**

8 July 2023

= = = = =

Vineyard visible.
It starts fading
as I look. Dawn
mist recurs
so while I write
the words down
the island's
almost gone,
a shadow fading.
How long this
process is
in which we wake,
as if the fluttering
finches and cowbirds
mallows and breezes

**were just footnotes
to an immense
work in progress,
tiny print, clear voices.**

9 July 2023

MANUAL LABOR

1.

**Hands in your pockets,
just use your words.**

2.

**Quarters for the meters
rubber bands just in case.
Sleek of the metal, maidenly
yielding of rubber, not.**

3.

**Place your hand
gently gently
on someone.**

**Inhale them through
your fingertip.**

4.

**Now you can begin
to understand.**

**Write some words down
and learn even more.**

5.

**Yesterday was Saturday
the rabbi is sleeping
the priest getting ready
the lama halfway up the sky
understanding us onward.**

6.

**He doesn't need hands
for that work but we
usually do. The alternative
is intriguing, a tropic
island not far in the bay.**

7.

**Think the bottle cap
off the Pepsi,
sit firmly in your armchair
and walk the dog
you don't even have.**

8.

**But come back soon
to the feel of things,
the actual. We have
a friend in Slovenia
we've met only on TV,
she sent us chocolate
we could actually
unwrap and share and eat.**

9.

**The lost sheep
were goats anyway.
The mountain needs them
for psycho-energetic business
of its own. Wild goats,
bleat loud! Help the rock wake.**

10.

**Hands again,
I fancy my fingers
grasping the ram's horn,
shofar of the temple,
I can finger the instrument
but have no right to play it.
Doesn't that remind you
a little bit of language?**

11.

**Whatever else we are
we are geology
shaped by fire
or dragged by ice**

**each stands firm
in the in place,
the place that found him.**

12.

**Only we have hands.
Rest your elbow on the desk,
rest your chin in your palm.
Hands are not just for the other.
But what if they suddenly could
feel who you really are?**

9 July2023

== = = =

**I was out there on the lawn
deciding yet again what poetry
was, is, and what it should do and
how I should do it I wasn't
actually on the lawn, I was just
looking at it sloping down to the
road, letting my eyes cross and
reach all the way down to the sea.
I was just sitting at the window
watching what the world is
supposed to be doing to me, the
way any faithful child must,
learning to say the words that
come from somewhere into the
mouth. I wasn't on the lawn, I was
on the sea. But I wasn't there**

either, poor clever me to be
where I am not, and let it be real.
Reality is such an odd word for it,
isn't it? It must come from Latin
res, 'thing,' so reality must mean
the condition of being thingly. I
tell myself and my students Write
Thinglish—Pound's phanopeia
comes down to that. If it's
mentioned, you can see it almost
almost feel it, or in this case swim
in it. Almost. That's why I saw
lawn, road, sea, so that you know,
or know at least as much as I do.
God forbid you should know less.
So the lawn. The lawn knows
plenty. Rabbits, garter snakes,

coyotes, plenty, sunshine and geometry, growl of golf carts, 40 degree slope up from pavement, sunshine and a stone left from the last glacier, what more can I ask? But why am I telling you all this? Because I need you. The lawn is not quite enough, even with the window I see it through, and the birds on it. You.

All of this palaver is to stay somehow in touch with you. You are the only reason language exists. Someone wanted to tell you something, warn you, warm you, love you, lead you, use you, how can I know what they

wanted, maybe they didn't want anything special, just made some sound to say here I am, hello, and somehow the sound stuck, stuck in the world and language lasts. Lasts a while in one form and then gradually morphs this way and that way, so we can barely grasp what Chaucer is murmuring so boldly, but we get some idea. And we know he's talking to us, we know because we hear him! Hurray, it takes two to talk! No wonder I'm in love with you.

9 July 2023

CALIBAN

**Wait for the island
it will bring back
the word you lost
then the tempest
will compel
the animals of love
to cave deep
into one another
and the gold pour out.
For this is summer
when the truth hides
deep in greenery
and the sea is tolerant
but hushes our doubt.**

9 July 2023

= = = = =

**As if the go
of rain had come
again the few
drops on the screen
breezed away
or fell to vapor
where they rolled
so soon it seemed
no weather was.**

**Not up to me
to say, the cold
wind explains.**

**Forgive my silence
my speech, to be
is a busy intersection
even this quiet dawn.**

10 July 2023

= = = = =

**Changes in mucilage,
what sticks to the mind,
dream tatters,
some wizard's schemes
spelled out in comic books,
cross the street
against the light,**

**there is no traffic
anywhere, he sang,
the crooner on AM
from who knows
how long ago,
who dares hear it
now? a sidewalk**

**is a kindly place
step up and stand,
no one there, wait,**

**I'm always telling you
wait because I want
my now to catch
up with yours.**

**What we see reflected
from shop windows
as we yearn for merchandise
gives you some idea.
I look at objects, things
on display but all
I see I must see through
my own image**

staring down at them
as if my seeing
spoils the sight of them,
their purity of otherness
infected,

but then a bus
rolls behind my reflection,
faces looking out
and it feels a sudden grace,
an absolution, to
be in their eyes
for that moment
just somebody
just standing there.

10 July 2023

= = = = =

**This used to be then
and now look
at what has happened.**

10.VII.23, *lune*

= = = =

**Compromise
is a sort of breakfast.
Part of you
is still in bed asleep
but enough of you
is on its feet
for you to get to the table,
Taking the first mouthful
is signing a treaty,
yes, it is today
and for better or worse
I'm here on the battlefield
hoping for truce.
Coffee has more hope in it
than tea. Or is that just me.**

**So every compromise
yields a little nourishment
-fatty bacon, soggy oats?--
and sets you free to go on.
Onward! to work, church,
school! Or at least to lunch.**

10 July 2023

= = = = =

**I thought:
today is Proust's birthday.
Then the sun came out.
Power of his words,
bless the man for going
on and on and on.**

10.VII.23

= = = = =

**Cavalry with no horses
Artillery with no bombs
Air Force safe on soft ground—
we do it all with smiles.**

10.VII.23

FOG

Days many,
with fog.

Fog is wonderful
it is a person
so close, touches
you gently,
gladly feel it,
know it's there.

When you grow up
on islands you come
to learn that fog
is a visitor, a friend
from a far country,
sometimes stays a while,
then one day is gone.

**The sadness you feel
when fog has gone away
you feel a little of it still
when fog comes back,
you know how close
you'll be together, but also
how sooner or later
you'll be alone. But mostly
you're happy to see your friend
again.**

10 July 2023

EMBANKMENT

There am in London at the end pf
my life. Of course my language
brought me here, to sav one last
time my own mispronunciations
in classic fog, chill rain, foreigers
all round me, all my own genetics
fled into the countryside, Here it
seems to me I have done my job,
which mostly was composed of
gazing across the river at
Lambeth and watching pretty
woen walk alog the Embankment
nearmem past me, and trying to
say out loud what the mists of
seeing said to me. A hard job to

keep so silent and say so much.
You should be able to hear the
rain, watch Slovak laborers
trundle washing machines from
truck to door, hear a modest
church bell bonging not far away,
it is morning, after all, some
people believe in God. I am cold,
because old. I shiver in a breeze
that would once have cheered me.
The bench I sit on has not much
feel to it, just lift enough. Rest
with back upright, right leg
crossed over left knee, the way
men did, the way men did. I have
a long time left The end of life
lasts years and years, old smoky

**London, a little white packet of
Sullivans from the Arcade,
breathe in, breathe out, I haven't
smoked in years, now is never, no
lasts forever, noisy little black
boat on the Thames, river, river,
wait for me, I am the man who is
your life, river, river, come from
the sea, river, river, tolerate me,
tell me what to write, teach me
how to read, shimmer with pil
licks to tease my sight, estuary,
estuary, I am here for you. But
across the river the bishop in his
palace distracts the rover with
learned speculations, schemes to
make prayer relevant in a noisy**

**world, and I get disrracted too,
the rain rains harder, my
umbrella quivers, across the
water unseen Brixton Hih street
rolls miles up the hills of Kent,
why am I here, why does
language always bring me,
Grandmother Florence why did
you leave, why do you bring me
back on ths rainy summer day to
meet the precious goal of saying
so? Right now the rain is just
enough to say.**

10 July 2023

= = = = =

Drunk a decade before
a draft of taking,
be chaste, my wit,
the dawn advised,
sea bright as could be.

2.

Times twist
together, the Scottish
islands in our heads
weave then and now
tight, stretched taut
over the hip
of what happens.

3.

**I think it meant
a decade is ten anythings,
years, hours, breaths
inhaled two weeks
ago suddenly now,
chaste, purity
of this sudden place
alive with glad forgettings.**

11 July 2023

= = = = =

Be loud as you can be,
I'm only listening,
patient as a turtle shell,
carapace, shield
as the words rain down.

2.

I said my love songs
to the fog
just in time,
it's gone now.
Knife blade
of the morning sun
gleams on smooth sea,
off islands clear.

**They say the mainland
rains today—do we
bring our weather with us?**

3.

**The game called Scrabble
Is as close as we come
to how the angels
do their work, work
with the letters of us,
in us, that they find
to say our next step for us,
in us. Remember rivers
if ever you doubt.
Then come out with me,
come out.**

**4.
Short
and knotted tight
like a song
by Kurtag,
gone almost
before you hear it
but not quite.**

11 July 2023

= = = =

**But before you switch
gender, gents,
try growing a beard.
Wear it five
years then shave it off.
Now you know
what it feels like to
be the one
who will never change.**

11.VII.23 *lune-ish*

= = = = =

for M.I.

Dear Michael,

Someday in your miraculous
Netherlandish skill at still
life limn for me
a chassis of an old-time radio
condensers and wires and
incomprehensible whatsises
spread out in a landscape
where vacuum tubes stand
like minarets or temples
over a visually crazy town
where everything works
and hums ad buzzes

**and lights up, heats up,
and if we're lucky we
suddenly hear Mahler
floating down the sky.**

11.VII.2023

= = = = =

**Make the sound
of seeing this,
the yuck or yum
as the permanent infant
in our vocabulary decides.**

**Then make the sound
of listening carefully
to the next thing said,
then the sound, so loud
the sound, of keeping still
with no opinion at all!
highest note a voice can reach.**

11.VII.2023

= = = = =

**Doctor Jacobus advises this:
sleep in a round bedroom,
paint a compass on the floor
so you can choose each day
or night the direction to which
you spin the bed so your head
will point when you go to sleep.
Every direction from which
Sleep comes to meet you
empowers sleep with a distinct
different rhythm,
caravan of imagery.
And time is potent too—
afternoon nap with head due
west**

**makes imageless energizing doze.
For example. Your house
can be square or triangular
if you dare, but make sure
the bedroom is perfectly round.**

**[For more information, consult Dr. Jacobus'
How to Sleep, Babel Press, 2028.]**

11 July 2023

SLEEP COMES FIRST.

**We wake in the womb
and work ourselves out.
But sleep is Heimat,
homeland, primary.
Our waking hours
are on loan from sleep,
and dreams renew them
every night. Sleepless
means deedless. I woke
early and already
feel the strain. But birds
at the feeder calm me
with their focused flurry.**

11 July 2023

= = = = =

**They sent their words
to me, wrapped neatly
but my clumsy fingers,
you know how fingers
can be, over-eager, hurried,
and before I knew it
all that they had said
sprawled out in my head
as if I were saying them
myself. Who was I then?**

12 July 2023

= = = = =

**They say a door
is coming today.
New screen door
to replace the old.
But still... the idea
of a door coming
to me! To us, who
spend our lives
approaching it,
eager or hungry or
hat in hand. And now
we wait calm as we can
to see what comes.**

12 July 2023

= = = = =

**Send me your leaves,
nudes, trees, faces,
mountains, seascapes,
the fine lines steel wires,
shadows like knife blades
dividing our spaces.
Muscular delicacy, tense
simplicity. Am I just
asking for everything?**

12.VII.23

= = = = =

**Open the answer
To find the question
Then let the children
Walk around the rose bush
until they see
the bossy Robin red breast
perched on an inner branch
and hear him tell them
What the words mean.**

12 July 2033

POET

**The dictionary opened fire,
the messenger crouched low,
hid behind the deep hedges
of his ignorance. Not for him
to know what the words mean
or be wounded by them
flying past him. Murmur maybe
the few words he knows,
all language is a foreign language,
o mother, mother help me.**

12 July 2023

SAD SONG

**Any word, any word
from the mattress man
who comes to take
our sleep away,
any word, any word
of what we'll do then,
sleep on a sunbeam,
make love in a cloud?**

12 July 2023

DENDROPHONY

For some years we have been coming to my wife's family's cottage on Cuttyhunk Island now ours.

Beside and behind the house are a few trees, a species unfamiliar to me, the sycamore-maple. And it is only this year that I have begun to be able to hear them.

I speak of listening to trees. At home I listen every day, summer and winter, to the lindens, maples, larches, locusts clustered around us. Now when I say 'hearing' the trees, that's shorthand for a subtler, sweeter

process. I listen, listen long and calm, and words and notions form in mind, notions that feel like they're coming from the linden or the maple. They come somehow tasting of tree. Nothing is heard, but it still is hearing.

And now, close to these sycamore-maples on the island, I begin to understand. I hear the trees back home because we are rooted in the same earth. Their literal roots ate in the very ground I live and walk on, and over the years I've lived there, I too have grown roots, we all have them we all do, roots into that

very earth, so we have a sort of brotherly, sisterly, relationship with the trees of our shared earth.

They speak, they are close, they comfort. Now on this island I have to learn to listen, let myself feel—as I have not until this very year—a sense of nexus with the earth. Shallow still, but I can feel it growing in me, from me. So now I dare to sit outside beside the sycamore-maple and begin to listen. I promise the tree, these trees, I will say onward what they tell me, what they let me know.

12 JULY 2023

= = = = =

**As if there were another way
of being right without it showing.
We don't congratulate a tree
for showing leaves in April,
so take me for granted when I say
something obviously true. Stars
have horns like mountain goats,
children are old men living
backwards—
things you vaguely remember
hearing
somewhere long before, Bible or
Shakespeare or some teacher
who liked to quote Emerson.**

**But now it just feels weird if true
or at least worth quoting next
time**

**you run out of things to talk about
and your neighbor just won't
leave.**

12 July 2023

= = = = =

**Or angels, are they.
Let's get serious,
why would we go on and on
four thousand years
if they weren't real?
Whatever they are
there is something in us
that makes them be.
Or makes us listen.
You decide,
I'm too busy hearing
buzz-saw downhill,
gull on the roof.**

13 July2023

= = = = =

**Wade in the meadow,
walk on the pond.
Let the mind do all the tricks
language learns it.**

13.VII.23

= = = = =

**And now for the never!
The parachute rises,
hauls an airman
up to his plane,
stuffs him in the fuselage,
folds itself up
and waves goodbye
to the marveling
myriads below,
leaving them to wonder
why do anything at all
when everything else
does everything.**

13 July 2023

= = = = =

It's mild July, yet somehow I keep wanting to date this letter March. I knew a woman named that once, but that's not why. Nothing March about the weather. Maybe it's just that in olden times the year began then, they were no fools, they knew what spring meant, and solstices, and all the stuff of nature that we are. Maybe I want to begin again, and get it right this time. But it's still not clear to me, in me, where I got it wrong, a lot or a little, this time round. So let the 13th of July 2023 be the 21st of

March when you pick the year's number. And let's see what happens. I'm sending this letter to you because I'm a little scared of keeping it all to myself. Time is a funny animal, I don't want to annoy it – just think of all the things Time can do and call every one of them now.

13.VII.23

= = = = =

**The urgency of stone
keeping me to the trail,
if I want to walk
where the glacier went,
God knows I want
to be part of all this too,
surf on far shore,
schooner moored in the bay,
presidents serving their terms.
Hard to walk on stones
to get down to the beach,
moving against time,
arrogant sneakers
toeing a pebble aside.
Sea glad. Sea shell,**

**we intrude on history,
I feel like a child
tearing pages out of a book.
But children are all urgency too.**

13 July 2023

= = = = =

**What better to do
this Bastille Day
than liberate prisoners
trapped in the mind.**

**But who might they
turn out to be?
Names and numbers
and old addresses,
lyrics locked in darkness,
and how shall I set them free,
by dragging them out
and thinking hard about them,
desiring them afresh, dreading
them all over again, try**

**to make sense of words
that have no meaning now,
now, now, this precious
present? Or is it better
to try to forget them absolutely,
ship them back to their time,
their homeland? Or am I
their only country now?**

2.

**Forgetting is a music of its own.
The herring fillets we supped on
yesterday abruptly bring to mind
a little ramekin of mac & cheese
in the 42nd Street automat
in 1955. Suddenly the English**

**horn, the loud bassoon,
viola creeping under memories.
So it seems we have stored in us
everything we need. So
shut up and start talking.**

3.

**Remember the shower curtain
remember the cut glass mint dish
on your aunt's table. See
what I mean? Remember, ivy
on the garage, the ferris wheel,
the voice of Nixon on the ferry,
I will go to China, he said, and I
was on my way to Wisconsin
the lake looked just like the sea.**

**See what I mean? I dip a shard
of matzo into peanut butter
and still feel I'm allowed to eat.**

4.

**Notice I leave out
my memories, many,
of France. I never saw
the Bastille if it's still there,
I know it's still here,
in me, in you, waiting for a crowd
of rowdy youths to come
shatter silence and then what?
That's what I'm wondering,
what really happens
when we remember?
re-member means putting**

**things together again,
shouldn't it? Help me,
kind reader, tell me
what I'm trying to reckon,
how every memory
becomes a kind of person,
green skirt on the omnibus,
a swan on the river Spree,
a firehouse in Flatbush
with its gleaming brass pole,
no names please, the smoke
of a cigarette drifts away.**

14 July 2023

= = = = =

**When you stretched out that way,
that day, across two chairs,
I saw you as altar, modest, clean,
from some nearby religion
with a gentle sense of God.
When we lie down we seem
to become holy, *sacer*, at least,
something just north of human,
no wonder people learned
how to sleep, and where
to make love. Horses and cows
don't know it. *Be horizon*
it says in us, be the earth
all over again and be new.**

14 July 2023

= = = = =

**Thunder.
Huge flag
flapping in the sky.
The regiment
of otherness
assails our here.
No wonder
thunder scares us,
voice of the unknown
other pounding on the door.**

14.VII.23

= = = = =

**Pick up a pencil
write with the eraser**

**then whisper to me
the words you wrote**

**by rubbing them out.
I think we will be friends.**

14.VII.23

= = = = = = =

Every launch
lingers
at the dock,

sing a song
of waiting
while the light
lifts
go-to-sea-ers
from their hammocks

and the wind
waits too,
all the distances
furled snug

**in every sail,
*come
wait with me.***

15.VII.23

= = = = =

**Urgencies abound
but in this sleep
I recognize a gentler
pastor who waits
for the word to
slip down in me
so I can answer
as they say
with my life,
doing
as they say
what I'm told.**

15 July 2023

= = = = =

Undim the dark
and lightning did,
the house shook
from the closest peal,
too slim a word
for that roof-shuddering
forte fortissimo
then sleep put
everything back together
and the dark took care.

15.VII.23

= = = = =

**So many other sides
to this one sheet of paper,
you could read anything
in its blank expanse,
a little fly-specked by
flecks of see-through
from the worked-on side.
Range free, mountaineer,
move as you like,
you're in the country
of holy trespassing.
Just tell us what you find
before you let the paper fall.**

15 July 2023

= = = = =

**Resting my head on my hand
I suddenly had to deal with
the fact that there was bone
between what I felt with my
fingers
and what I was thinking. Bone!
In me! O abrupt anthropology,
suddenly learn what I am.**

15 July 2023

= = = = =

**A cloud knows how
to calm the sea,
sink the harsh glare
shallow it
to kindly radiance
so all the sea is bright.
Clouds know these things.
Clouds are water too.**

15.VII.23

= = = ==

Blue mallow
alongside clematis
under sycamore-maple.

O tree of two names
just like us,
you winter here
and know the score, so
tell me what I should know,

what I should be.
Colors point the way,
blue or pale, but you
are all one green

is it like religion,
like marriage,
unum careo, one flesh,
two become one?

How can I be one?
No organ but the wind,
no church but the sky
but it all marries me.

Trees tell us who we are—
I read that once
in a woman's face, my mother
held in dream.

15 July 2023

= = = =

after Milarepa

**When you keep silence
long enough
the stone starts to speak.**

16.VII.23, *lune*

= = = =

**Dawn in Dubai
is a strange machine,
it comes up out of nowhere
and everything is red,
red dressed in yellow
and the wind is hot.
I don't know the name
of anything I see,
dazed by soft warm brightness
so I go back in
and wait for my plane.**

16.VII.23

= = = = =

**But here I am
on the other side
already,
no need to wait,
everything here.
But where is that?
Questions come
even to the humblest—
or so the tree said.**

16.VII.23

= = = = =

**Cloud strata
weft in palest blue.
Neighbor island
looks like a cloud too.**

16.VII.23

= = = = =

**Trees in full leaf
summer riches
sometimes you miss
a shriveled autumn
ruddy single leaf,
you're a child
idling in the library,
browsing the Greek classics.**

16.VII.23

= = = = =

**The surfers dress
across the street,
load their cart
with boards and gear,
the daily invasion
of the patient sea,
slave labor of vacation.**

16.VII.23

= = = = =

**But when I lay there not asleep
or only halfway sometimes
I lost my sense of who I am,
a comfortable anonymity
caressed me, I thought
of names and numbers
that might be me or anyone.
Sometimes specifics are lies.**

16 July 2023

= = = = =

**I made my mobile
take a selfie
of a painting on the wall
itself. They threw
me out of the gallery
because I didn't want
an object, just an image,
but they sell things.**

16.VII.23

= = = = =

**So let the spool
roll across the carpet
and all the twine uncoil,
so follow the line
you let things make
for themselves and find
what they have in mind,
where does going go
when you let go?**

2.

**It looks like a straight
line at first, but gradually
contour and texture,**

**gravity and substance,
make it veer. The sentence
you thought it was saying
changes a little, space
revises thought.**

3.

**So follow, follow,
A little dust fluffs
up from broadloom
as your fingers trace
the twine, then a little more
when it rises over an old
oriental carpet, then speeds
along polished hardwood
flooring to the doorsill.**

**And there is stops, the pool
idling by the inch-high blockade,
tumbled to the side.**

4.

**So the line leads
a little curvy
to your own front door.
Is it an instruction
to go out, abandon
the safety of same
and leap over the doorsill
out into otherness?
Or is it, it is a line, after all,
you could catch trout with it
or fly a kite with it yet bring
the kite back from the furthest**

**skies, a line, you can tug
on it and bring the outside in,
you can lie there, half
on Persian wool half on wood,
and pull the world in,
welcome otherness and rest there
before it, worshipful, at peace.**

16 July 2023

= = = = =

**Shore a thousand feet way
the surf sings closer,
Listen is what it all says,
ocean, maples, glacier.
Each curve of the ancient
sentence shapes what we hear,
seldom daring to explore
the grammar of natural sound,
as if we needed to believe
that nature only says one thing.
But now the words are distinctly
spoken, spray on the rocks,
we can even catch
a glimpse of what the sun replies.**

17 July 2023

= = = = =

**Shave the chin—
make it easier
for the air to slip in,
holy spirit's local agency,
breath of the morning,
breathe!**

17.VII.23

APOLOGIA

**Who am I
to tell you what to do?
I'm a word in my mouth
I have to speak out-
just your luck to be nearby.**

17.VII.23

= = = = =

**One lovely thing
about the sea
it's hard to lose
the drift of it.**

17.VII.23

= = = = =

**When does a square
have six sides?
When you want to pick
it up and play with it.
And there it sits,
proud in its way–
if you want to lift a square
suddenly there are six of me.**

17.VII.23

= = = = =

**When the animal
comes to resemble
its owner, beware.
And just be aware of
what either of them,
both of them, have
in mind. In mind for you.**

17.VII.23

= = = = =

**But when does it begin again
the long long right way
of doing things, tying shoelaces,
singing opera,
walking by the river,
sending a letter back home
when you are home
all the time, where did going
go, why are you here
and shouldn't you be worried
about nothing going wrong
but everything being so far away,
socks in the bottom drawer,
book on the highest shelf,
cheese shoved back in the fridge
o why is everything as it is?**

Why can't shoes lace themselves,
why can't we grow fur to keep
warm,
has the *Mayflower* gotten here yet
why do I have to lick my fingertip
just to turn to the next page?
And what is waiting there for me
even now, beast in jungle, slice
of toast waiting on old china?
Don't you understand that if we
don't complain, nobody will,
and then the machinery will purr
with satisfaction and go on
hiding my reading glasses and
wiping out cities with tornadoes.

17 July 2023

= = = = =

**Large hidden in small,
how old is your mother now
what pocket do you keep
the secret codebook in
they gave you at birth?
Look, some water spilled
on the table, use your finger
to write a word or two,
water through water,
they'll dry but still be there,
you know it, you did it,
the slightest touch lasts forever.**

17 July 2023

= = = = =

Lift the latch,
the book walks in.
Saunter in me
says its pages,
I am a Holy Land
enough for now,
for you. I am not
the truth, but when
at last I use me up
you will be closer to it,
closer and ready.
Read me to be ready.

17 July 2023

= = = = =

**Any book says that.
Believe it
just enough to read.**

17.VII.23. *lune*

= = = = =

**He comes to do the door.
It is a morning thing
any time of day,
learn to open,
learn to close.
A door is what
a house is for.**

18.VII.23

= = = = =

**My eyes leave off to listen.
The island drifts away in fog.**

**The clock keeps trying
to explain everything,**

**works so hard at it,
never stops.**

**Whereas a door at its best
drowns in peace.**

18 July 2023

BREAKFAST SONATA

1.

Not yet,
we'll wait
Sometimes weather
is enough
to take in.

2.

Now her plates accept
their warm slow burdens,
we gather, rather slowly,
haste hurts, sloth suits,
the bacon's too hot anyway.
Wait, wait. Listen to my dream.

3.

**Bite if you must eat
this pale boiled egg,
lather something
on your toast,
it better not be butter
or I won't share.
Coffee heals,
mocha makes all the difference.**

18 July 2023

= = = = =

**Water weeps up
slow on shore,
consoles us
for having to live
way up here
alone in air
far from its primal caress.**

18.VII.23

= = = = =

**There are reasons
there are seasons
but it's too early
to ask me what they are.**

**Come back in October
with a brown leaf
tucked into your blouse–
by then I'll have borrowed
some answers from these
trees murmuring
on their way to sleep.**

18 July 2023

ROTA

Steering wheel
all very well,
go round and round
to get someplace else,

I get the point,
but the Incas
never had the wheel
the books say,

I wonder if I have it now,
bikes can do it
foot by foot
but I don't ride.

**Leave me resting
by the mountain lake
to watch the priests
climb up and down.**

18.VII.23

= = = = =

**The fog came back
to sat good-bye,
to say this hour
is the perfect time
and come again.
Again is always waiting
in sea mist, again
is halfway home.**

19 July 2023

= = = = =

**There's a kind of anesthesia
comes from looking out the
window,
everything's out there now
so suddenly no hurt here.
Or doubt or dismay
or whatever it is we wke with
abruptly vanishing in pale sky.**

19 July 2023

= = = = =

**I wonder how annoyed the birds
were**

**when we first invded their sky
and they had to learn to share it
with our kites, balloons,
zeppelins, airlines and worse.**

**Do young birds still her tales
of the old days when all
the sky belonged to them
and humans knew their place,
down here, scattering seed?**

19 July 2023

= = = = =

The title of Dr. Jacobus' newest collection of essays, *Tree Sea Thee*, identifies the three foci of his appeal to the divine: tree at our side, we live in its shade and by its fruit, the sea all around, and the other person, each and every, in whom we must come to feel the presence of God.

20.VII.23 *Annandale*

= = = = =

**Translation I suspect
has a wondrous purity
for the translator–
all feelings roused
find perfect outcome,
mind and heart
balanced at last.**

20.VII.23

= = = = =

**Jome is heart,
all the me
so many make,
the trees, the trees
of home,
density, immdensity,
they breathe me
some new way.**

20.VII.23

= = = = =

Nyi.ma'i.lam,
road of the sun
I think she means
by showing us
right here.
To be right here
is to follow
the road to the end
again and again.

2.
Traffic or no traffic
things pass by
but what they pass
remains you and I.

**Consider that song
and me singing it
for lack of a lute.**

3.

**Very bright morning,
very calm trees.**

**The word for Sun
is feminine in Germnic,
Tibetan, maybe Japanese.**

**But what do I know
of gender overseas?
I feel her here
on my waking hands.**

20 July 2023

= = = = =

**The business
of beginning again.
Set up a tent
in the parietal region,
hope for no headache,
snuggle down
in what you think
and think some more
and wait. Surely
the day will come
bringing you something,
days do. Things to do,
begin start slow,
like child remembering
his middle name**

and wandering why
it didn't come first
and what it means
to be there at all.

I speak from experience,
little though I've had.

Slowly the back of the skull
wakes from its everlasting
drowsy ballet and shoes
an image, it flickers
past your tent, grab it
as it goes, even if
you don't get the right words.

20 July 2023

MANIPLE

**a napkin-
like cloth to wipe
up holy spills.
You learn a lot
from accidents
especially in church,
what does it really mean
when things go wrong?**

**2.
Din't tell me devil.
Tell me rather
why the good**

**now and then
takes different forms.**

**3.
Sings different songs,
the little alto who spoils
the boy sopranos in the choir,
o that was me, alas,
it taught me other ways to sing
so only the paper could hear me.**

**4.
The sun makes shadow–
is that an accident?
Slow as stone moves
friction still does its work,**

**things move. O the majesty
of these great trees
to whom I have come home
from the sea, is their
amplitude an accident?**

5.

**I think the sun moves
into Leo today, speaking
of movements and those
who move, are moved,
come back every morning,
sing at the window. Wren,
you said, but my ears
were in the pillows.**

6.

**f remember correctly
thye wore the napkin
over the left wrist,
used it to wipe the sacred
vessels –gold or silver-
after they had served
the bread and wine
that seemed so much more.
We are ready
for what we need
to clean to be
ready for th e next
thing that happens,
the everlasting miracle
of what comes next.**

21 July 2023

= = = = =

**Mercy mouse.
Trees
coming closer.
Live
till they get here.**

**2.
I lost my accent
along the way
now nobody thinks
I am where I come from,
it is disheartening
a little, when the street
itself has forgotten you.**

3.

**Time is mercy
mousing along,
nibbling the days
neatly, leaving
enough to sleep on
and wake to be new.**

4.

**Mouse
because little
Mercy
because now.**

5.

**I have built
(he said)**

**a monument
more lasting than b bronze.
He meant in language,
words, wonders, literature,
but the child leaning Latin
thinks Hmm, he must
mean silver. Or gold.
Or even– did the Romans
have platinum?**

**6.
So language plays
tricks on itself,
no wonder I think of mice.**

7

**But mercy means me mild,
my cool hand on your arm.
You had just come in the room,
the phone had rung, a spam ccall,
some news we lern toignore,
and there you were, fresh
from the shower, you stood
beside my desk, I leaned
my hed against your arm.
This is the part I mean,
this moment more lasting than
bronze.**

21 July 2023

= = = = =

**Laudable incident
in the morning news,
a truck slowly came
to a stop, pulled half
off the road, so cars
moving by could read
the clean white metal wall
wordless in morning light.**

21.VII.23

= = = = =

**All four cats
walked with them
through the woods
to the stream and all
six of them came back.
Astonishing serenity–
didn't the stream try
to take them with it?
How could the woods
just let them go?
I'm afraid to leave
my front door behind me–
in my world there seems
to be no going back.**

21.VII.23

= = = = =

**Finding the words
the way birds do,
picking, pecking,
testing, tasting**

**then to the next
branch, tree,
ravine, marshland,
metropolis.**

**Language us,
words are so natural
huge wings spread
out by the gull**

**about to take off.
About to fly.,
to negotiate
the whole sky.**

22 July 2023

= = = = =

**Aftermath–
Cataholic children
hear it as the
After Mass
nd think it means
when everything else.**

22.VII.23

= = = = =

**Leave out laughter–
but that's hsrđ to do,
even a piece of wood
is laughing at me.
I'd better learn
to grin as they say
and bear it, maybe
even learn to smile.**

22.VII.23

= = = = =

**How can I tell
if I'm telling the truth
until I say it?
The words know,
telling is like
listening out loud.**

22.VII.23

= = = = =

**Trees be my seas
this while.
Both say
true life
around us
and both speak.**

22.VII.23

= = = = =

**Waiting on the other
side of the bed,
that is how the symphony
begins, late romantic,
Kalinnikov, Glazunov,
the cool expanse of sheet
warmed only by breath
of the one who lies
one ear in the pillow
watching for the one
who will come lie there
and make all the music mean.**

22 July 2023

= = = = =

I think it's a wren I hear
but I'm not sure. That
is a maple and that
is a larch, I know
because they tell me so,
people and leaves.
I wonder what trees
call themselves,
how the one we call
Liriodendron tulipifera
signs the messages
its roots speak through the
ground.

22 July 2023

HOW TO WRITE

**Be longer at it,
the 2½ foot bat
hits the white ball
440 feet. Mean
something like that.**

22.VII.23

= = = =

Dr. Jacobus' Inaugural Lecture

We are gathered here today, on this precious open meadow-like vacancy just outside Paris to celebrate our urgently vague enterprise. Outside Paris, to be sdure, beause we must alwas ree,ber to be besdie the pint.

What they casll the point is where everybody feels comfortable—the fatal delirium of the unexamined. We have to stare everything in the face, we have to renew the infant-like

wide-eyed stare of just looking at everything, as if for the first time.

Our ancestors in the College de ' Pataphysique, in their unfailingly playful way, stood in both worlds, and nymch of their lila, their divine play as qwe called it in Sanskrit, came by hopping from one foot to the other, showing us they knew full well the ordinary nature of things, but played with alternative perceptions of the common world—to put it in the most boring way.

We, on the other hand (no foot required) admit we know nothing. We stare at things until

we see them clearly, or else get tired and tumble back into the comfortable dark.

We don't have to know.

Isn't that a glorious discovery? We vwait for things to tell us what they are and what they want of us, f anything. We wait! We listen. That is the foundational perception and project of our Acoustisophy. Like good children, we do not tell whaty we have not heard.

Now, tom bring to a meaningful close this first world-congree of

**the Acoustisophic Sociey. we sit
silently for a quarter-hour in
utter suilence, listening, then
hurry south into the city. find a
place to sit and write, and write
down all you have heard akong
the way.**

22 July 2023

= = = = =

**But it was otherwise.
The clouds chiseled
over the prairie—
does a lover even
dare to call it that,
puszta, steppe, grasslands
belted round the globe,
prairie? Who is he
to know such names,
his closest contact
with the earth the steps
down into the subway,
A train best, all the way?**

2.

**But the clouds were there
to be seen. As once
coming home on a cheap
flight front he west
he had seen the northern
lights, green aurra,
over the Adirondacks.
Sometimes even we
are permitted to see.**

3.

**Once he stood on an empty
little road in Kansas.
How own shadow stretched
out in dront of him**

**on the grund. Doesn't that
mean something too?
Doesn't that somehow make
him a citnizen of this place?**

**4.
But all he had
was the word,
that passport
into dream,
your own and
other people's.
He said it again,
slow, pray-
ree, and again,
and the traffic passed.**

**But the clouds
were still there,
so shapely, so seeming
for him to name them.
But all he wanted
was to reach up and
shape them with his hands.
Or let them shape
the movement of his mind.**

23 July 2023

= = = = =

**But the clouds were still there,
still waiting to be spoken.
White is not enough, blue
welcome enough but not news.**

**Tell the news, tell what only
they can let you know, news
about your mother and father
dead so many hears, news**

**about what you hide from,
not just storms and dragons
but from your own desires.
You can't hide things from clouds.**

23 July 2023

AT THE OPERA

\
.

The overture
came afterward,
the skaters ringed
around the fictive ice,
the mezzo mother
squealing guidance
at her counter-tenor
squealing child,
then all went dark.
Blank. Like inside
a pair of trousers when
you step into them by night.

2.

**So it was the overture
after all, the libretto lied—
books often do,
it's so hard going on and
on telling the truth.**

3.

**Flights came back,
the lake deserted.
Empty rowboat seemed
to float. Nice trick,
floating on no water.
And then a head appeared
looking back at us**

over the stern, a pang
in the music, sudden fear,
a dear friend leaving forever.

4.

I packed up th program again and read the composer's note: "If Alban Berg can write an opera.without usic, beautiful, powerful, game changing opera like Wozzeck, I want to writ to write an opera without words, no dialogye, no arias, not even no *sprechttimme*, no words at all.So I commissioned a poet to write my libretto, since theyknow better

than most of us how to empty words of meaning.”

I felt insulted, I wanted to jump up and flee this fancy fakery but then the stage lit up and silent women, dressed like Israeli soldiers, moved in formation to stage center so I waited.

5.

A man came crawling on hands and knees.

A sign hung round his neck swayed as he lurched onward, a word on it in some unfamiliar

alphabet, Georgian? Armenian?
Too far away to read in any case.
He crept dog-like round
the ankles of the soldiers
who paid no attention to him.
Sometimes he'd sprawl
across their booted feet,
or even curl between their legs
passing from one to another.
The music got louder and louder.
The curtain fell.

24 July 2023

ALGEBRA

The algebra text was green
with a hard cover.

It felt like a book
but it wasn't.

not enough words,
toomany numbers.

And all the letters
of the alphabet had lost
their sounds, their sense
and were just signs
of this or that unknown.

So it became the child's work
to pry open the numbers
and find words, as with any
book he would prymopen

**the words to find stories
or mysteries, or quiet
messages to him alone
from the language itself.
Can numbers feed him too?
Can the book become a book?
He watches the weird little
symbols scatter on the page
like insects bored to sleep
by the work they do, equal
to what? greater than whom?
It's a hard job, but that's
what childhood is for.**

25 July 2023

= = = = =

**Not a leaf stirs.
Sunlight
holds everything in place.
The trees abound.
That's what I want
to give you when you wake,
a vista of intricate emerald
right there, here. The new
tourism, really being right here.**

25 July 2023

LE POETE DE TROIS ANS

Write a word
on the sidewalk
in white chalk
as you have seen
the others do.
Then learn the rain
comes to wash it off,
wash the word
into gutter, gutter
into river, river
into world. Now you
have done your job.

25 July 2023

= = = = =

**Implicit,
like mice in a house.
Come with the lease,
comes with the weather.
Wait for something better.**

2.

**When you see a word
don't let the letters of it
go unexamined. Words
hide in other words
in other words. Letters
dance for your delight,
look up from what they mean
and set meaning free.**

3.

**It is now
so you have won.
Simple as that.**

25 July 2023

= = = = =

**It's hard to tell
what a mountain means.
The White Mountains
look like angry men
railing at the sky.
The Catskills here
women gently
sleeping on their sides.
And I saw Everest once
alone on the vast horizon
and still wonder what
or whom I saw.**

25.VII.23

= = = = =

**From the other room
I can hear hootie-flootie
noises. Could this
be music? It's like,
what is it like, like maybe,
maybe climbing up into
a postcard of the Parthenon.**

25.VII.23

= = = = =

But if they said so
did I listen?
The clematis
almost lost
among the mallow
under the torrent
of sycamore leaves,
the garden untended.

2.

Remember the old song
I just made up,
When you wake up
it's easier
to get out of bed

than to get sleep
out of your head.
No wonder kids were
taught to pray at waking,
it's a decent way of not
being who you think you are.

3.
So I have no skill
at gardening,
or only this one:
to leave thighs alone,
free to grow as they choose.
A tree is not a servant,
flowers don't need to say ma'am.

4.

So later that same day
he wrote his first
Treatise on Tele-haptics,
the science of touching from afar.
Weeks later that had become
a fashionable spa-like institute
where he taught that skill
in threeweek seminars.
Between sessions the learners
cooled off in the big pool
and he would watch them,
seeing how their bodies
moved with their new knowledge.
And then he woke up at last,
thoudnds of miles from
that suptuous Swiss ex-hotel.

5.

**Because things need
to be there
and we need to find them
where they are,
no long haul cargo ships,
no parcels on the porch.
Stretch out the mind and find.**

26 July 2023

= = = = =

**Thunder grumble
not too far,
Hence the color
of new day.
Remember when people
wore clothes,
bent to drink water
from fountains
in movie lobbies,
remember wether,
the way tires rolled
slishily along wet asphalt,
remember shoelaces,
Javanese shadow-plays,
handball courts, molasses?**

Now you're ready to begin.
***Buon giorno*, sweet animal,**
even if it decides to rain.

26 July 2023

= = = = =

**But sunlight
suddenly says!
And its yellow
coaxes blue
into the sky.
I know, I know,
color is the
first miracle.**

26.VII.23

= = = = =

**So here I am
with space on my hands
and nothing but you
to fill them with,
so I hold tight
to what knows
so well how to go.**

**This is a love poem
from 1532, maybe
by Thomas Wyatt, here
very badly transcribed.**

26.VII.23

= = = = =

**It wanted to be sleep
but the city turned,
people walked past.
Follow them. Follow one
seemed a god idea.
At least it led
onward into distances
crowded with unknowns.
Waking through a city
is a branch of mathematics.
Even in dream. The one
you had your eye on
anishes in crowd, leaves
you free. To do what?
Waking is hard**

**when you're already there.
Stand by the curb, watch
the little rain water left
trickle down the gutter.**

2.

**You can do all this
without leaving the pillow.
Then the big decision comes
and suddenly, implausibly,
you're on your feet.
A tree shakes its head
in the grey light, you feel
its gently reproaching your sloth.
But sloth it wasn't—
sleeping is hard work,
you wake exhausted, ready**

**for some consolation, breeze,
birdsong, even a phone call.
But then the sun comes out,
the ancient normalizer, and here
you are again again. That voice
still speaking in your head.**

27 July 223

= = = = =

**Write me a night club song,
the kind they used to swing
before I was old enough to hear
let alone go in and listen.
It's not that I like that kind
fmusic, it's that I yearn
for evidence that the past
is past, people love antiques
because they're not sure
they're living now, or loving
at all, but that's none of my
business. But music is
ad I can;t make it. I try
banging consonants on vowels
and something comes out**

**but nothing you can whistle
as you walk down the street
half-drunk on *Honeysuckle rose*.**

27.VII.23

CEDAR HILL

**The beauty of this place,
the trees do all of it,
all the work of shape and color,
all the murmururation of the leaves
it's up to us to understand,
so patient they are, green
with giving, n human
work needed but to let them be.**

27 July 2023

= = = = =

**The cause is Christian,
half a mile pathway
between close hedges
vicariously flowered,
cool fountain moderate,
pale blue over.
We are inside a building,
a book, a way of thinking.**

2.

**So to be really here
us the way there,
be good on earth
to get to heaven.
Here is there. Maybe**

**Rimbaud the best
Christian, I am the other.
And who could the other
be but you?**

28 July 2023

= = = = =

**Don't show me
what I want to see,
don't sigh that contract.
Leave me leafless
like a winter tree,
my business is waiting,
using every word to wait.**

28.VII.23

= = = =

**Gold merchants
of 47th Street or
and the little man
whlights hte candle
on the oon, all gone,
lost into thinking.**

2.

**But beneath bare feet
a hard mosaic happens.
It is now, and it has
always been here.
What we know elapses.
What we are persists.**

3.

**So by niw history
and myth indisyinguishable,
a kind of Russian game
you do with facts. Fact!!
Latin, means something made up.**

4.

**So thinking
is mostly remembering.
The other part is you.**

29 July 2023

= = = = =

**Quietude, that Camelot,
our noble causes resting.
The leaves are busy reading
what he wind wrote yesterday,
back in the Middle Ages.
The silence of now is new,
cloud drift, naked road.
A silence with a shimmer in it
and that too we have to read.**

29 July 2023

WRITING SEEMS

sitting at a desk
with many drawers,
cubbyholes,
compartments full
of random things.
And from this cutter
most of it from
before you were born,
you have to rise
with coherence in hand,
something to give
to the government
or to a friend, something
that can love them.

29 July 2023

= = = = =

**Moravian morning,
I bring you a mystery
disguised as myself,
solve me, solve me
with beauty, and do it
fast, before the wind
can blowme away.**

29.VII.23

= = = = =

**Caliber of the steeple
aimed at the sky,
carry the wishes and fears,
turn them into prayers.
In the Haute-Savoie the steeples
are metal look ie tin,
abrupt and ordinary, like life.
They're roundish too, polite,
insistent. Were as in our town
they stand like daggers in the sky.
We climb any way we can.**

29.VII.23

= = = = =

**Along a narrow lane
with Talmudic cleverness
a camera wielder catches
glimpses of the waxing moon.
The moon through trees–
what better proof
do we need of the rich
genetics of the mind?**

30 July 2023

= = = =

**Do roses taste
a bird fly over,,
shimmer of shadow
feeds their color?**

**We call them ;sese'
and resume to number them
but they are infinite,
the palm of your hand
is part of geography.**

**And from the next
word out of your mouth
science can rebuild Nineveh.**

**Or Camelot if you prefer,
Christians and Jews
dancing together
on cobblestones in rain.**

30 July 2023

PREDILECTION

**forecast the taste
of a stroopwaffel
nibbled on the Herrengracht
right here in your home town,
East Anyville, Iowa.**

**I mean the mind of things
comes before and follows after,**

**I mean the shadow
more than the branch,
branch mre than trunk,**

**yet the whole tree
is a colony of heaven.**

**Forgetgeoraphy,
Think about place.**

30 July 2023

= = = = =

**Bring me two
glasses of water
if you please,
one to drink, one
to dip my fingers in
so I can remember
with my skin the real
nature of what I'm
taking in. This cool
clinging pleasant thing
on its way to being me.**

20.VII.23

= = = = =

**When I saw the news clip
of the broken roller coaster
I thought of how we used
to stand on Bleecker, watching
apples roll down Barbara's spine.
O body you eternal Playland.**

30.VII.23

LOST WORD

Whatever the word was
it cracked as I woke
and a voice came out that said
words never crack,
you never woke,
sleep on and try again.
So I gifted from Stuyvesant Falls
a shield-shaped something
made of running water
and held it like a mirror
to the sky, so the world upthere
could see what I see
and then I woke,
word ntact, hands dry.

2.

But what was the word.
It was what it is
right now, noon far,
looms weaving lace curtains
over a century ago,
I trip on shadows. Shadow-
there's a good word.
Shade, yes, but where does
the ow come from,
it is a cry of pain, or sound
of sudden recognition?

3.

So I dont know
what the word was

or even what it is.
I will sit patiently
by the big window
waiting for it
to remember me.
That almost always works.

4.
Satisfy my guilt,
blame me for the weather.
Caution. Captives
of a forest if we start
counting trees.
A school bus pauses in shade.
Im getting closer
to letting it find me
for the first time again.

5.

**Try another language, lad,
the sunlight whispers,
one you don't know,
Cree, or Sami, or the one
even we'll be speaking
a thousand years from now.**

6.

**That's exciting to think about
but I am now, a needy child.
Girls play with dolls
imaging them onward alive,
I play with words
hoping to corral them,
maybe even ride one or two**

all the way to what I mean.
There's the word, the wonder!
We are mean to each other
but we mean well, how can one
word mean such things?
I wake at last, lost
in turbulent vocabulary.
Back to the window.
Study the calm trees–
they speak without words.
I hear their eloquent peace.

31 July 2023

HOLIDAY

**Clarity is cumbersome.
Mumble cross-eyed
through dark sunshine.**

31.VII.23

STUYVESANT FALLS

**I sat ub the car and listeed,
you got out and surveyed,
showed me a hoto of
what I was listening to.
Kids in bathing suits
ran by, adding evidence.
Lazy men have all the luck.**

31,VII.23

= = = = =

**Wait to want more,
winsome means friendly
to look at, lavender
soap in a Delft dish?
Bank teller's smile
even handing money out?**

**Wait to want
more information.
The books are bleating
on their dusty shelves
but pay no mind,**

**the river keeps you
safe from any Ohio over there.**

**Listen till the want
reasily begins. Focus.
Desire is your only lens.**

31 July 2023

= = = = =

**The lame deer
limping through the woods
suddenly turns and looks
right at you. You know
suddenly, that you are chosen.
Chosen to spend your life
being kind as you can.
Now you can walk back home
and know it. And know how.**

31 July 2023

= = = = =

**It's easy to be cold
just ask your bones
they need all your meat
to keep them warm,**

**it's easy to be dry
just ask your lips
when there are no kisses
and the room is dark**

**it's easy to be here
just ask your tired feet
they have walked to Babylon
every day and back.**

31 July 2023

