

1-2024

January 2024

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=====

**Sun new
year's day
sudden other.
Start slow
and marvel,
everything road.**

2.

**Doesn't all come
from the Arabs in Spain,
they were on their way
tp chilly Ireland
but lingered in luxe
too long the battle.**

**Think of Donegal if.
From the south and not
the north came
the foreigners' fort.
Good grief, I would
be someone else.**

**3.
New Year is always
a bit personal,
to be oneself
amid the firecrackers,
confetti, drunken balloons.
Hard at any time,
real work to do it now.**

**Ah, there it is,
my face in the no mirror.**

4.

**Of course when someone
like me says 'me'
they usually mean you,
or anybody everybody else.**

**What seems a confession
is a scholarly instruction
built upon years and
years of saying the wrong word.**

Sun means you.

**Moon means the tears
in my own eyes.**

5.

You are with me
and it is light.

Noontime on this
planet we sailed to
over our own sea.

6.

Not Spain, not even Ireland.

Someone else
deep down the well of now.

Here, they call it,

strange word with

he and *her* both in it,

and *re*, thing or king.

Will you be my queen?

7.

**I perched nearby
as you made the romesco,
a word you tell me
comes from Arabic,
mixture, Spain, red
pepper mush Sherry brought,
walnuts you ground,
cheese chopped, garlic
squeezed, salt and oil,
oil. Every note on the scale.**

8.

**You in burgundy robe
me in my new slippers,**

**that's how it started,
the whole year
in this moment,
kitchen sink, touch
of your forearm,
sun just come out again.**

1 January 2024

= = = = =

**Orchids on the table
still fresh from last year!
We dazzle our brains
with numbers,
while the flowers smile.**

1.1.24

=====

**I don't care if you're
3,000 miles away
Yorkshire moors or Joshua Tree
I want to see
what you are seeing
see with my own eyes
not with yours,
my own eyes beside
you, inside you.**

2

**It's the only way
the way that matters—
you are skyscraper
I am standing on the roof
sharing the world only you
can see so I can see it too.**

2.1.24

NOTES ON THE EPIC

**Where the epic begins
the scent of mulberry
changes the air.**

**The hero riffles through
the pages of her ancient book
looking for the note
her mother left her.**

**She finds it, closes the book
and the action begins.**

2.

**Plain. Tower. Caravan
coming ever towards it.
Multiple merchandise,**

do you love camels,
salt, springtime,
old movies, siestas?
The hero waves her wand
and that world disappears.
Honest office now,
bored men hard at work.
Big windows faintly
tinted bluegreen.
A city out there
beyond repair.

3.

The wand didn't work
so from a flask
she wears beside her

she takes a sip
and lets it dribble
gently from her lips.
Instantly the ground is changed
where that fluid falls.

4.
Now the tale
picks itself up
and runs briskly
over this new earth.
Empires are renewed
with queens to rule them.
Arrows fall hurtless from the air,
we have a world without enemies
and her lips are still wet.

5.

**But how hard she's worked
to walk us this far!
Epics are endless,
only pause when someone dies.
But death is not the issue here,
magnanimous mountains
make good places to hide.**

6.

**And that's where she's led us,
the mind's Mammoth Cavern
tucked under all sleep.
Whenever we wake
we find we have turned**

**into crystals, citrines,
calcites, even rubies.
She leaves it to us to choose.**

**7.
Like so much else
in this strange world of ours.
Maine or Mexico,
we shudder but decide,
Pitkin Avenue, Rue de Seine,
look in your pocket,
see what money tells,
the vague aluminum coins
left over from war.
No more war. Money
murders enough of us,**

from the coin
the sword rattles
to the sidewalk,
unread.

8.

Wait, that was just gossip,
everything goes on,
her epic does not know
how to end— who could
have taught her to cease?

9.

Continuing is the only flower.
So she plucks one,
hands it to me,

and she goes on.
Here, this petal
I pass on to you.

10.

Why so many towers on a plain?
One for each of us.
Stand tall, dear friends,
and let our shadows
mingle as the sun moves
The hero pauses now—
time for lunch.
She looks at me and says
all you are is what you have done.

2 January 2024

=====

**Listen to your memory
let it bang away
on its little marimba
inside your head.
Soon enough (or maybe
not quite) you'll
shut it down and turn
to now. Turn to me.**

2.1.24

= = = = =

**Wading idly
you step into
a swimming hole
eight feet deep.
You swim out safe
startled by the speed
of your own reactions.
Who is this body I live inside?**

2.1.24

=====

**How can they call it
one state if a river
runs through it?
Don't they know a river
is a mother feeding
her children while
keeping them wisely apart?**

2.1.24

=====

for B.R.

**We turned out
to be teachers
who flee from our students
and burrow deep
in ourselves but keep
talking on and on. There:
job description on this
fallen (rather lovable) planet.
Not quite right. Try this:
we turned out to be painters
and we want and mean
we hide on the wall
in plain sight. But who**

comes to view them?

I do. You too.

**We are each other's
welcome visitors. I think.**

**I better watch your
eyes as you read this.**

2.1.24

== == == == ==

Numbers

are so seductive

you hear one and keep

wanting to go on and on

but sometimes a number

is curling cutely

6 for example

you want to roll

along the ground with it

tumble over then lie there looking at

the sky

but numbers can wake up then

**the feeling of savage power comes, 7
grinds its sharp
plow into the earth
of our thought
and there we are.**

3 January 2024

NOTES ON THE EPIC, BOOK 2

But then she smiled
as if being here
is being enough.
If, but followed
by no subjunctive,
here I am, as Luther said,
what else can I be?

2.

Then the towers
began to shake,
earthquake season,
we had to dance, yes,
the two of us! just

**to keep pace with the earth,
earth, volcano, cars skid,
heigh-ho the Autobahn,
flashlight batteries kaput,
keeping company in catastrophe.**

3.

**As history settled around us,
or started to, I could tell
she was tired of taking
care of my anxieties.**

**Here, she said, a ticket
to Majprca, where a villa
awaits you. But i don't
speak Sunburn or whatever
the natives jabber. OK,**

she said, here's Warsaw
in winter, six room flat,
with servant girl—hands off!

4.

So the poor lad i am
spent the next few years
wandering from concert
hall to concert hall,
trying hard to understand
how so much happens
in c minor. Enough about me.

5.

She steadied the towers,
put the grassland

**back to sleep.
There is a religion
in doing nothing,
so she let the action,
listless as it was, settles
sleepy to the sleeping ground.**

**6.
This gave the Vikings
time to drag
their towboats
and their barking nouns
ashore. This was her plan.
Dissident grammar saves lives.
Her epic has no hurt in it,
only hearing.**

7.

**Long lines at the grocery
for a new kind of wheat,
grows up inside you,
turns into butterflies
beautiful wings,
they sail out of your mouth
as words. Unquote.
That was the song she made
all the children sing.**

8.

**What became clear
then even to me
is that epics are written**

**by the heroes thereof.
Or therein. So she
keeps our story going
till the dropped coin
comes to rest.**

**9.
She met the Vikings
at the gate
she had built
for just that purpose—
you can't get really real
without a door to go through.**

10.

**Met the Vikings,
taught them
how to turn
swords and spears
into harmonicas
and ballpoint pens,
gave a vintage Parker 51
real ink pen to the Viking
king, showed them where
their farms would be,
gave them four sheep.
three goats and a cow,
told them a bull was on its way.
Then she put them all to sleep
and skipped away.**

11.

**Had I told you she is young,
a mother younger than her son?**

12.

**That is the logic of epic,
maybe of us.**

**We grow backwards
from what we do.**

**Wake up the wombat,
peel the gold banana—
that's another song she
made us kiddies sing.**

13.

What is an epic?

A sung story that never ends.

The *Iliad* and the *Tain Bo*
and the *Knight in Panther Hide*
and *Ramayana*, they won't
give up, they flow
into each other, ever
and ever, great rivers
from everywhere, flowing
into one same sea.

14.

I read that in a text
she sent me, always
taking care of me and my like,

**reading rocks the towers
but rocks the cradle too.
A good breakfast
she once said
lasts a whole day.
The right word a whole life.**

3 January 2024

= = = = =

**If I call the one
I see in the mirror
by your name,
I can say anything
I like to you
and far, far away
you will understand
you have been spoken.**

3.1.24

NOTES ON THE EPIC Book III

1.

Weltering in weeds?

**No. Reading comic books
in the shade of a frowning
parent? Maybe. Going
to graduate school? Yes.**

**Got the golden tassel
on the cap, a good disguise.
Still a Viking, still a farmer
wondering why lemons
don't grow well in snow.**

2.

**Her point was that
we know so little.
She had to explain it to me,
how we don't know how
anything works,
how much the sound
makes the action function,
what hides behind
the simplest word,
the friendliest shoulder.**

3.

**Mature, grey suit, seemed
weak as he stood
so I put my arm round him,**

led him round the corner
where a medical man
was reaching tricks
of upper body massage.
I told my charge he
could trust him. Don't
think he believed me.
At least you tried, she said,
next time [ick him up
and carry him home—
if you're both lucky
he'll remember where he lives.

3.

As a boy I learned
that the *hwaet!* that

**starts Beowulf meant
one loud strum upon
the story teller's harp.
I think Dobbie told me
but I can' be sure.
That was before I found my harp.**

**4.
Now you're going somewhere
she said, but don't ask where.
All poetry is motion
forward, slow or quick,
sun or shade. But oh my,
don't ask why.
Why means where.**

5.

**Epilogs are solemn
and prologues are fun.**

**What about the logos
in between? Here again
we are in no man's land,
which is why sent
a woman to tell you all.**

**Words leave shadows,
shadows grow, multiply.**

**Detectives find clues and learn
action has happened.**

**They write books
and call it history**

but it's just tomorrow

breathing down our thoughts.

**Any girl will tell you that,
write fast to make it now.**

**6.
When the invading Vikings
had settled down
in banks and broadcast booths
and a hundred flags
raised all over the globe
and countries claimed
the right to own
some part of the sea,
the epic had to change
its clothes. No single harp
and please, no guitar.
It was and is the era**

**of the divided warrior—
Achilles bursts like a beehive
and a million hero-lings
swarm through time.
But I am the single
hero she said, the dream
you can't help but remember.**

7.

**Most boys will recall
how in the schoolyard
girls seemed to stand apart
seeing to be doing nothing
but seeming wonderful
somehow as they stood.
The girls were learning**

how to unwrap silence.
even the wordless terror
in a man's heart.

They could do it already,
some of them,
with a giggle or a glance
and the boys hurried
back to basketball.

8.

Lady, lady, I beg you tell—
there are deciduous trees'
abd evergreens— are
there two kinds of humans too,
one that sheds into silence
then comes back singing,

**and one that talks all year long?
She only answered with a smile—
you know, the way women do.**

**9.
Schools have cafeterias
where the learning happens
after loquacious
siestas in the classroom.
Eating and drinking,
squinting and squabbling
trying out all the new words,
all together one by one,
her magic formula.
The Trojan War begins,
quarreling over who**

**gets the last
pierogi on the platter.**

10.

Is it now yet?

Not quite.

When will it?

I know all there is

but not what is not

**You have to mke it happen,
make it up yourself.**

11.

**I sometimes use speech-to-text
software, and often it writes
back words I never said,**

**whole sentences I don't
even understand,
let alone recognize
as versions of what I meant.
Is AI also Artificial Ignorance
or a voice from beyond,
Artificial Inspiration?
Should I go with what
I meant or what it says?
Why ask me, she asked,
ask your computer-wallah.
We don't say wallah in America,
I complained but she frowned:
Who told you where we are?**

12.

**You are all
the places you have been,
you are all the music
you have heard sung
by human voice or human hands
toying with their instruments,
plus bird cries, trees
creaking in the wind,
waves off Rockaway.**

13.

**Dress warmly
and listen to me
before help arrives.**

**Epic is your only hope,
it is the language
inside language-
come, speak it with me.**

4 January 2024

=====

for K.L.

**You walked up a hill
in Provence, and somehow
I can't forget it.
You walked up a hill
in Provence
as if you knew, you did know,
that every hill is Calvary
and when you climb
all the way up you meet
him there, he came there
to find you, find us,
and you knew. Once
I stood on hill in Provence**

**and looked out over
the plains along the Cavaillon,
hundreds of acres
dense with orderly rows
of lavender in bloom,
as if a flow of his blood
coming towards us in the west.**

4 January 2024

HISTORY 201

**Improvident mercenaries
slogging from slaughter
to slaughter? Maybe not.
Maybe when we die
for or into others,
other living beings,
we are reborn higher–
more and more humans
on this small planet?**

5.1.24

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**Soon enough
we'll forget
what day this is
and then we'll all
just be weather.
Numbers only work
if you don't stop counting.**

5.1.2024

=====

**Words help us
remember the song.
Or am I the other
way round?**

5.1.24

= = = = =

**Shadow stretched
on winter lawn,
long line of pilgrims
coming to the shrine.**

5.1.24

=====

for E.S.

**When you walk a while
alone in the hills
you are changing
slowly, subtly, faintly
your home in town
you come back to
soon enough. you're
a little tired, a little solemn
like coming back from church.
But the house is changed—
the cat and the carpet
seem different. You can't
prove it but you know.**

**The hills changed you,
you changed the house.
So you sitdown at a window
and write a letter
to a friend. Grammar
is so relaxing, as if
language is your real home.**

5 January 2024

NOTES ON THE EPIC Book 4

**Held. German for hero
but what did he hold?
Held his body at the ready
for the word she'd speak.
She spoke. Not all at once
because her word
was very long, and slowly
as he heard her
he became part
of what we heard,
turned into her
until there was one voice,
one hero standing there.**

2.

**History, as if it mattered.
Sometimes she remembered
to tell me. It is a pleasure
to dine on someone
else's memories, she said,
here, eat some of me.**

3.

**When Achilles fell in love
with Polixena and deserted
the Greeks, the Trojan
who wrote the Iliad
left that story out.
It had to end with something
more than a love affair,**

**Hektor's funeral,
or just before that
the young hope of the city,
His son falling from the walls of
Troy**

**4.
She made that very clear.
Clearer than fact
the silence of the heart.**

**5.
We were all Vikings then;
that much was clear too.
We thieved with our hands
not with our keyboards yet**

**but greedy fingers busy.
As if deep down we know
only the body really does,
while the mind sleeps in its fantasies.
It's true, she conceded,
that hip you so admire
is not innocent. But dear
child watch me as I sleep.**

6.

**But heroes do not sleep,
so there is mystery here,
troubadour motets,
late Latin lyrics
when men had almost
forgotten what**

**those old words meant.
What words mean.**

**7.
But women never forget.
That is the basis of epic,
of civilization.
Men blunder, women recall.
Hence who the real hero is,
She said, and didn't even smile.**

5.1.24

NOTES ON THE EPIC Book 5

1.

Curvilinear? Only in Asia.

**I knew your father
so I know you.**

**Not every prince
becomes a king
but princesses are
another story.**

Each one rules.

2.

**I was afraid to tell her that
before, because I knew she
knew all that already and I**

**didn't like to appear so soon
as the groveling worshiper I am.**

3.

**Sheesh, they used to say,
truth tales so long to tell.
Too long. Hence poetry,
to get there fast, even with
a little dust in the eyes.**

4.

**Girls threw snowballs for a while
then soon git bored.
Aggression at a distance
was nor their style.**

**And it wasn't even Troy yet,
let alone tomorrow.**

5.

**A badger in Roscommon once
explained to me
you always have to drive through
at least one foreign country
to get home, even if you've only
been out for an afternoon spin.
He lay dead at the side of the road,
but his voice was clear.**

6.

So these were the things
battle was all about,
I had a list of them somewhere
but now I forgot, so now
I can't think of a single reason
even to raise my voice in wrath.

7.

Be glad, *mein Kind*, and calm.
I could give you reasons many
but I am the hero here, be still.
And since you never asked me
I will explain. How to make an epic.

8.

Be a woman. Then e a bird.

**Fly up on a calm day, float
above a busy river, clutch
your old camera and with it
take a snapshot every minute
of all the gleaming wakes,
the white lines all boats make.
When you fly home, become
a thoughtful person. Take
all the photos, superimpose
to see the mesh of wakes.
Study these marks, all wakes
inscribed on one another.
This is your alphabet.
Your task is to discover
the sound of each letter**

these figures form, Then learn
pronounce them reverently, word
afterword until
the story's done. Poetry
hurls past into future. Sing,
content with all that
you've been made to do.

9.

What we have seen
is what we are.
What we have said
is what becomes.

6 January 2024

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**Write the word. Carve it
onto paper. Doing that
is like saying a prayer,
no matter what you do
or don't believe. Prayer
avails. The sincerity
comes from the deep
commitment of your hand.**

7 January 2024

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**Snow. The soft
insistence of its argument
Secen inches of it, say,
all white and even sun
shining through it..
Let me harm no one.
Let me be almlsg white.**

7.1.24

= = = = =

**All the bare branches
covered now, opulent
scribbles of snow
on the white sky,.
Message and messenger
the same. How long
will it take to read it?**

7.1.24

=====

**Castanets? Mice
in the floor boards?
The human ear
is a goblet of mystery.
Near or far, out or in?
Often you have to use
your whole animal
self to decide.**

7.1.24

COSIMA

So on her birthday
she woke up to find
the *Siegfried Idyll*
singing all around her head,
around the house, her
birthday present coming through the
air.

this is an anecdote from
Wagner's life, how men
write music to please their wives
and feel wise, please come
dance with what I mean please let
me give you a sound

**that's all I can make,
so we can be together
wandering in the hills
dreaming of the hero
I could never quite become.**

8 January 2-24

=====

**Characters shimmer
from song to song,
the tiger, the elephant,
the queen who rides them both.**

2.

**And that is all sleep said.
I glimpsed the tiger,
the others were just words.**

3

**When sleep turns to words
you know it's time.
time to do something,**

**maybe with sunshine in it
or even other people.**

4.

**But who will see my tiger,
who will ride the elephant—
clearly I need good advice.**

5.

**But that's what sleep is for,
I thought, the ancient forum,
all the wise assembled, arguing.**

6.

**But when the wise one
turns to face us**

**the chalk stains on his cassock
clearer than the word he wrote.
scrawled on the messy slate.**

7.

**But if not sleep
whom should I ask?
Do people swallow darkness too?**

8.

**But why ask anything,
let the images linger.**

9.

**Images are just wrappings
on a parcel from the future—
or the past or some such thing.**

10.

**The antiquary at his bench
polishes old bronze back to gold.
A woman looks at his efforts
through the shop window.**

11.

**There, that's what means.
Time was the clue. But wasn't time
Einstein's illusion?**

12.

**She looked again and saw squirrels
running scared
over the new-fallen snow.**

8 January 2024

=====

**I told the woman
to leave her name at the desk,
we'd analyze it quickly
and let her know. Wonder
why she looked at me oddly,
said nothing, went away.**

8.1.24

== == == == ==

**I was thinking something
then it thought me tight back.**

Try to sleep, my child,

I told myself. But sleep

is a chilly chamber

on the lagoon by Venice,

the sea birds keep at it

and sleep is slim.

2.

Think again,

the thought replied

the wy they do,

tireless procession of thoughts

**like ants on a picnic table
or pilgrims to a holy place.**

3.

**So wake up
and don't complain,
the climate in you
no more controllable
than the snow sifting down outside.
More snow!**

9 January 2024

=====

What do we do now?

We wait.

What are we waiting for?

It will tell us when it comes.

9.1.24

=====

**No flowers in the flood
but the reflections
of all the shapely colors
passing overhead,
as if roses turned into robins.**

2.

**Don't be ridiculous,
it's winter, no roses,
there still are robins
but they hide. Think
what you're seeing
before you speak.**

3.

**Yes, mother. Language
demands that of me,
I agree. But in the dark
I dreamt another water,
couldn't I have that one too?**

10 January 2024

= = = = =

**Inch along, dull chariot,
we have all day
to get to night,
mountain glory sunset
then the dark.**

**Inch along, let every
speck of dust be read
and understood,
it's all an alphabet anyhow,
help me read my lessons.**

10.I.24

== == == == ==

**Say to the Sun
Enroll me in your plan,
let my fingers understand
the contours of a cup,
my eyes learn when to blink
and when to stare.
Trees teach me the next step.**

10.I.24

=====

**When you go to bed
see yourself walking
fast down the long
dark hallway that leads
to sleep. Let your image
in mind do all the work
while every muscle under
your control relaxes
fully. By the time
image gets there you'll
float silent in deep sleep.**

10.I.24

= = = = =

**Have you ever noticed
that if you listen closely
you can always hear
a piano playing nearby,
a sort of built-in Bösendorfer?
Sometimes you
can even choose the music
but music has a mind of its own.**

10.1.24

====

**Recalibrate the encyclopedia,
let the elephant
walk in the snow
and the sun spells every
word correctly.**

...10.1.24

== = = = =

**Here I am
at the foot of the escalator
watching the empty steps rise,
smoothly, growling, offering
passage heavenward
to saints and queens,
carpenters and dancers
and even me if I dared
step on the singing steel and go.**

10.I.24

== == == == ==

**Who is anybody?
Antlers of the deer
glow gold in twilight,
why? Who is watching?
Does watching
make the thing seen,
the deer step out of the woods?**

**2.
Remember Hubert
and his white stag,
legend of the crucifix
between the antlers,**

**God's horns, Don't kill,
hunt with the heart
and leave the arrows home.**

3.

**But the legend
distracted me
from my question,
who is anybody anyway?
Identity is our commodity,
especially nowadays
when we have nothing else
to commerce with
or sign our names.**

4.

So who??

It has to be you.

**Don't know a thing
about me.**

You do it. You.

11 January 2024

=====

**Coat collar weather,
who is that
breathing down my throat?
I exhale pale blue smoke
without the cost of a cigarette,
thank goodness I have
something to complain about
out there, not in me.**

11.1.24

= = = = =

**You, the only
reliable pronoun.
Even you
always knows who it means.**

11.I.24

SANITY

**Sanity is a sort of game
a card game
with a lot of bluffing,**

**a little like poker,
a nineteenth century amusement
so popular in the very decades
psychiatry rose and led to the high
stales pf psychoanalysis.**

**Now we look at each other, pretend
not just to know
what they want or might be thinking,
so it's up to us**

**we pretend to know
what we are thinking.**

**I walk into a room
trying to imagine
what I'm doing there
and what my purpose
could possibly be
for traveling so far,
the thousand miles
from Then to Now
now only seconds away
and I keep hoping
I know what I want
and keep going**

**into the unimaginable future where
they're all sitting around
their cards close to the chest
or so I mean heart.
Soon enough they'll try
to convince me of
what they think I mean.**

11 January 2024

== == == == ==

**The color of the orchid
at night slips
off the flower
and floats around
the landscape of this dark room,
just pale enough
for tired eyes to dance with it
a few moments, a flutter dance,
but then the dark persuades.**

11.I.24

=====

**She's running forward
and her body
is running with her.
That makes all the difference.
and the quiet smile on her face
seems to be at the goal already
waiting for the rest of her.**

11.1.24

= = = = =

1.

**The word wouldn't
but the tree could
at least a leaf
let fall
a leaf to lead me.**

2.

**The linden tree has a heart-shaped
leaf a shape
we understand
to mean the two
halves of the brain**

**focused on one point
one will one desire—
no wonder we think
the shape means love.**

3.

**Word rise
over the sluggish bed
a thought comes
into the head
shaped like a word
but no word yet.**

12 January 2024

=====

**I would like
to be able to find
something that works
as well as trees work,
letting their leaves go
at the right time
and growing them again when the
time is righter.**

12.1.24

== == == == ==

1.

**the curtain billows
faintly in the sunshine
but the sun spins us around doesn't
she?**

2.

**I look out the window
and whatever is out there
stares right back at me—
the nerve of the world**

**to look so seriously
at someone who looks
so tenderly at it.**

3.

**I'm trying to make sense of this. It is
a machine after all.**

**it should work the way cars
roll usually or snow falls
or even fingernails
scratching on an old, old wall**

12 January 2024

=====

**Willful
and asking for more
the sunshine filters
through the lawn.**

**2.
In the afternoon
growing steadily
the light comes to its senses
and persists.**

**3.
Later still
doubt Creeps in,
the dark makes us suspicions**

**but we get
what we ask for, don't we,
darkness and rest,
repose and something more,
a little scary, close as stars,
beautiful as they are.**

12 January 2024

= = = = =

for M.I.

Imagine it otherwise—
we say that all the time
and do. That's what time
is for. Paint the patio,
import strange gods, play
scrabble with Parmenides—
then the Yorkshire moors
whisk all the images away
with soft low breezes.
In truth, the sea is never far.

12 January 2024

= = = = =

**Middle of the road
danger from both directions
anger of the autos,
broken beings on asphalt,
deer leaping for their lives
into the trees—
the white line an endless cry.**

13 January 2024

=====

**Wandering in wordland
the boy found a book.**

**A girl had written it
so he wondered if he
was allowed to read.**

**Words are very severe,
hold the reader responsible
for what they start thinking
as they read. beware of sin.
But isn't reading her words
too much like peeking
through her window,**

**isn't her mind an even
more private place? Still,
the furtive thrill of knowing
what someone else is thinking
and even wrote down so you
can see... he went on reading.**

13.I.24

=====

**When things get written
the world gets said.
Stonehenge is an alphabet—
not its fault we can't read.
Maybe we need only
a few more days in school.**

13.I.24

=====

**I've lived in this house
fifty-five years. When I
moved in I found a boulder
in the bushes, VOTE
FOR WILSON carved in the stone.
The message has waited now
over a hundred years for
me to pass it on to you—forgive.**

13.I.24

= = = = =

**Know him by haircut
know her by hair.
What we have
and what we do with it,
gives a hint of
which one we are
among the eight billion
pilgrims on this planet.
Or is it nine?**

13.I.24

=====

1.

**Was it enough
go lift the stone?
Enough. Was there time
for it to speak?
Speak.**

2.

**Endlessly preoccupied
with what not-me says,
the stone, tree, river,
what all the not-me sings.
That's me.**

3.

**Sly pendentives
of what others thought
is what we speak.**

**The world an old
abandoned church
full of images,
full of grace.**

We speak in echoes.

13.I.24

=====

If I had a dog
it would be an early
opera by Bellini,
I would keep it
curled up at my feet.
Every now and again
I'd give it a shake
with my ankle and set it to sing.
Otherwise I let it drowse
and I drowse too.
But I do not have a dog,
I have a job instead,
it still keeps me company,
curled up half asleep

**except when I suddenly
wake up and start to speak
or do I mean bark,
or do I mean write all this down so
you can understand it too?**

13 January 2024

= = = = =

**Rescue the reason
then soften sleep.
In between is a chamber
where no one walks.**

**But cheerful music
comes from inside—
doorways are the kindest
religion of all.**

14 January 2024

= = = = =

**Rapture renewed,
a slim disk spun,
a child in the zoo
runs from monkeys to llamas,
the world is small enough,
sun makes sure of that,
someone puts another
music on, don't know
if it can be called song.**

14.I.24

= = = = =

**It happens on Sunday,
parks and museums,
zoos are museums where
the statues are still alive,
sun comes out too
if you let it. Please let it,**

14.1.24

= = = = =

**So I asked the telephone
what do we call the dial tone
now that there is no dial?**

**The phone rang,
I answered it, a voice
I did not know said
Call it Ethel or Evagrius,
anything you like,
now go back to sleep.**

14.I.24

= = = = =

**I'll know the word
when I hear it.
Till then I'll sit
in this nice dark library
imagining I'm fishing
for alewife on the Metambesen
or panning for gold.
A book's open in front of me
so they'll think I can read.**

14.I.24

=====

**Used to be a bible
by bedside
printed in red
everything Jesus said.
All the other words
ordinary black on white.
Somehow I came to trust
only the red words
rising from the dark.**

14.I.24

= = = = =

**Revising the unwritten.
Pick up that pebble
by your feet, rub it clean
and let it fall again.
The trees are watching.**

14.I.24

=====

**Snow showers,
sunshine intermezzos,
Isn't time the strangest flower?**

14.I.24

ASPIRATION MOUNTAIN

**over Smith Valley
what can I do but try
to tell you the truth?
Hard climb, breathe in
the sharp air like a cigarette,
smoke without fire,
inspiration with dry lips.
Have you been there
with me, have you tried
to tell me the truth?
Soft mountain, sandstone
and shale, softer
than the words I hear.**

14.1.24

=====

**Clamor in the kitchen
woke the sleeping elf,
Oaf. Whatever we are
when we sleep. Iron
biomes steel, aluminum
becomes a soprano
complaining in B flat.
The sleeper wakes,
wonders, dozes, snores.
The world is made
pf music. At least noise.**

15.I.24

= = = = =

**I said to the woodchuck
why do you look
so like your mother?
A passing bluejay squealed—
you know the way they laugh.
Yes, dammit, I really do
want nature to notice me—
though that's where danger lies.**

15.I.24

=====

**Walk a window with a spider,
dazzle a cat with a sunray.
You can do anything now,
now you are a mind
renting a nice brain
well-nourished by
whatever thought eats.
Now be a dancer,
now be a priest,
the woods around you
applaud your personations.
Is that a word?
Are you even there?**

15.I.24

=====

**The trees foregather,
bare branch or lush bough
they press in on the parking lot,
so dense together that even
the leafless trees are dark;
I hear them chanting
Nature, nature!
Remember, remember!
I sit in the cold car
trying not to.**

**15 January 2024,
Kingston**

**Obelisk needed
in every public space
to commemorate all
of them and all of us
who went before.
History has to shout
to be heard over Now—
drag boulders from the mountain,
learn to read
the gospel of stone.**

**15 January 2024
Kingston.**

= = = = =

**Welcoming the weather
the wiser the wonder
and all the while doubting,
you can hear it in the choir
hopeful high notes maybe'd
in the Gloria, yes, it's all good
but am I good enough for it
and if I;m not, what
will it do to me?**

2.

**It being everything,
whoever's in charge.
Write more philosophy,
go to confession,**

**everyone you meet
is a priest enough for you,
one by one tell them
who or what you are.**

**3.
Of course it's snowing.
Stay home and worry.
All shapes share one color.
Can you do that?**

16 January 20=24

=====

**But then I wondered
was the sun bright enough
and tuned my eyes up.
Everything in focus except me.
How can I tell my mother that
or proclaim it from the pulpit?**

16.I.24

= = = = =

**Mind clutter, name clutter,
girls in the boys' bathroom,
everybody'ss birthday
forgotten yet again,**

**all my fault! I have to cry,
nobody round to blame,
feed the wombat, read the mews,
there must be something
somewhere,**

**now could the Bible
get it wrong? Relax,
you'll get over it,**

**this is just what comes
from going to school.**

17January 2024

=====

**Subway surfing
dangerous enough but
think of information surfing,
when you argue or explain,
trusting the facts you cling to
praying they really are facts,
not just guesses hurtling through the
dark.**

17.1.24

== ==

**Secret of Egypt:
they had no weather,**

**every day same sun,
same stars at night,
simple as sand.**

**They got to build
even their own time
stone by stone**

borne on the backs of men.

17.I.24

=====

Andante

walking

going by foot
to the end of the song,

feet chilled in tight old shoes
the road rocky
not smooth the way
Romans made them

but rough, rough
the way all of us
have treated the Earth,
hard to walk hard to talk

**but we get there
we get there,
flowers droop over the fence, we
smile at one another
the song is done.**

17/18.I.24

= = = = =

**Eyes pierce lawful
the very dark
to seize the bright half-moon,**

**the things you see
when you look
out the window,
you wonder sometimes
if it ever looks back.**

=====

**Before was a flower
but a girl was now,
every shadow a kingdom,
come home, come home!**

18.1.24

AGTER THE ODYSSEY

**The oar was a plowshare
so Odysseus ever-wise
took the warning
and turned round
hurried home, leave
nothing to be done
by anyone, even a son,
sp back to the coast
back to Ithaka
where he changed
into an old woman
but after years
of being an old woman
decided he was too available**

**it was too risky to be alive
the way even old
women are alive s
o he changed himself
into a book and went
up onto the shelf
where I've found him
has a cup of coffee with him
\many of the time.**

17/18.1.24

=====

**Salt was the first
human addiction.
Then came sugar.
Caravans starving our way
through sandstorms,
slaves sweating
in the sugar plantations.
Addictions are not
good for the soul.
I mean the globe.**

18 January 2024

= = = = =

**The leap the leaf
makes from the tree
into the mothering air
to linger floatingly
or fall tells us all.
Study the parting
in departure—is it
doing or being done,
willed or endured?
They say time will tell.**

18.I.24

TELL

**Talk it, tell it
the way it comes.
This could be long,
could skirt the coasts
of Anatolia and bring
lucid ink rubbings
of the carved stone walls—
isn't that what writing is?**

2.

**Start again. Memorize
a star, name it
into the sky some day**

**and see what it says
that night, no clouds,
dark of the moon.**

**3.
Religion? Honor
the weaver whose
web we are.**

**4.
This monastery down the road,
two hundred acres
and not one monk.
College owns it,
all roped off, what
are they protecting,**

**planning? No matins,
no masses echoing
in the noble nave.
The land is using us
maybe to celebrate
its own quiet liturgies.**

**5.
Sweet talk the river
all you like, it will
not pause to listen.
But it hears you,
it knows all that already,
the eels told it
and the sturgeons
and the seals down**

**in the harbor, they all
know it, they all tell.
Just like you or me
babbling to the river.**

6.

**Anatolia, as I said.
Sun comes up, Celts
move west, Greeks seep in,
Turks chase them out,
things go on becoming.
I know little more than that
but I'll show you sometime
snapshots of her in her new hat.**

7.

**Because it all winds up
in our hands.**

**I like these words *all*
and *everything*,
saves time to say them,
no need to fuss or specify
the whalebone on their lawn,
my badminton racquet
with a gap in its netting
the shuttlecock gets caught in,
eager boy studying the window
of the hardware store.
All takes care of everything.**

8.

There is a much greater difference between talking and writing than between reading and hearing. True or False. Find out before it is too late to tell.

9.

That's where the towers of Cappadocia and County Mayo come in, exclamation points to a lost proclamation. Bell tolling, man telling.

10.

**Riddle me this,
o rat in the trash bin,
the city was here
before you and me,
we all are immigrants,
why don't you learn
to talk or at least write,
so we could share
the wisdom of our exiles.**

11.

**I happened to be standing
in front of the house
where I was born.
A neighbor came by**

asked where I was from.
From is a funny word,
by then I had been
from so many places,
how could he know
I had not stood here
in fifty years? I pointed
to the brick house, stoop,
mulberry tree still
beside it. He looked
there and then at me
as if I were mute or impolite,
shrugged, walked away.
I was left alone with my past.

12.

**Call it illusion
but it is talk,
talk true, tell tall,
what matters is the lines
gouged in old stone,
runes, raptures,
anything written,
anything said.
You can lie
but language never can.**

19 January 2024

=====

**You can tell
he's worried now
about authenticity.
Does the word
he speaks really come
from the heart?
Does the bong really
come from the bell?**

19.I.24

=====

**She slipped off her gloves waiting for
the angel.**

**Angels are always on time
hurried through her vocabulary
to find a word in it,
found it, the one
that started her,
and she threw herself
into the wilds of composition.**

19/20.1.24

=====

**I held the weapon
it was a wafer
anyone shot took it
in the mouth
was eased of the long
burden of resistance
I said take just taste this
and rest, there is no need
to be anyone, identity
is just a war
or is right now every day
a life for peace,**

**take this wafer,
let it dissolve into peace,
the place of doing nothing, letting it
all happen
and it will**

**here, take this,
pull away from I thought,
it's up to you now,
the day sounds like a word
ready for you to say it,
tastes like something
you're holding on your mouth.**

19/20.I.24

RELATIONS

Around the corner

on Pine Street

my German uncle and Irish aunt lived

with a big shaggy

dog called Scoopy,

Joe played fierce stride piano, music

shook the living room

with his hard chords but he

so friendly so kind so loving a

carpenter fisherman quiet,

his heart loud in his hands.

a big Philco radio console

like mahogany furniture

against the wall, big sound plus

short-wave they never played.

**I used to go over and admire
its dial and pushbuttons,
one of them marked *television* but
there was no television yet— we
didn't know what it meant,
I thought might mean someone
somewhere very far away
was seeing something even further,
something
no one had ever seen before.**

19/20.1.24

== ==

**If this were a kingdom
and we had a king
and today were the king's
birthday, with drums
parading and organs
growling and flags
like butterflies everywhere,
we could join the parade,
hide ourselves in what
would be suddenly our people
joyous and noisy.**

**But it is only here
and naked now,**

**we stand alone,
talking calmly
into the quiet wind.**

20 January 2024

= = = = =

**Whose feather
was it fell
onto the snow?
Smallish, greyish,
something to pick
up and bring home?
Identity is something
flown away in the sky
leaving only
language to find us.**

20.1.24

= = = = =

**Liberally
as with an orchestra
not some lonely flute,
persistently,
like bees around the hive,
talk to me like that,
use hip and heart and hand,
every street Broadway
every word a house
in a great city,
open the door,
let me come home.**

20.I.24

JOYCE'S WALKING STICK

**Rigid, righteous,
stiff as a bishop's crozier
but without the curl atop,
a straight line
walking through the world
with only him to help it go.**

20.1.24

=====

**Wing-nut to tighten
what will to the wall?
I heard a woman
talking about angels.
Angel means messenger
but nobody knows from whom
the messages are sent.
Maybe she knows,
maybe she is one herself.
I could hear her thinking
*Am I an angel
or am I the message.***

2.

**Poetry is full of angels,
in fact poetry could be
fairly described as
angelology without religion.
Think of Rilke, think of Blake
or even those American
ladies at the party
talking of Michelangelo.**

3.

**But back to this woman
with her wondering,
don't let me wander
from the intense
urgency of her question.**

**I'll risk it all and say
we are all angels
come to find out a way
to speak our message. Listen—
when you can hear it yourself
it might be ready then say it,
screw it to the surface of things,
call it wall or house or church
or a soft green lawn to lie on
studying the silent sky.**

21 January2024

====

**Why talk about your
experiences—
wasn't it enough
to have endured them,
or does something
never stop happening
till you talk it to sleep?**

21.1.24

=====

**Towers and tunnels
and escalators
why can't I think about girls?**

21.I.24 RH

=====

**I was Goethe
scribbling *Faust*
as fast as that angel
told me what to say.
I knew the music,
he knew the libretto.
He whispered once
along the way:
the faster you write
the truer the words.**

21,I.24 RH

== == == == ==

**Mind a pincushion
of random facts
waiting to be spilled out
to prove a point
or sew a theory together.**

22.1.24

= = = = =

**Call a reporter
I have a government
loose in my backyard,
all kinds of new laws
issuing as we speak,
football banned,
dogs illegal, no more music
in public places,
If nobody comes soon
I'm going to open the gate
and let the new laws out.**

22.1.24

=====

**I need a different kind of exercise,
with wings and wind and cloud
and learning how to ride
down sunbeams then
climb up them again,
I need the muscles of the mind
to move me where my legs
will not go, I need sometimes
sheer altitude just to be.**

22.1.24

=====n

**Amber doesn't come in lodes
but you'll know what I mean
when I say I want one,
not like the famous
Petrograd chamber all
of amber wrought, or even
the lovely World's Fair room
the Latvians put up. Or was it
Lithuanians? I remember
the glow, the invitation
to sink deep into a substance
cleaner than flesh, pure time
rescued from history,
thus old enough**

**to be safe from aging,
pure clarity, colorful,
watm in the hand.**

22,1.24

=====

**Ice, shards of sheet ice
floating down the river,
lone tugboat moving
hast upstream, no barge
in tow. Easy miracles of winter,
man bundled up warm
walking downhill with his kids.**

22 January 2024

= = = = =

**In Swiss hotels
especially in the German
speaking provinces
hotels often have bedrooms
where the blankets
know how to speak.
Many a science enriched
with discoveries and theories
whispered to sleeping scholars
and many famous poets
were more like stenographers
than wise executives.**

22 January 202

GEOHERMAL

**Heat hovers
up from under the ground,
pouting from the upside
down sky.**

22.1.24

=====

**The statue spoke
Late Latin so we
might understand,
it had a voice like opera
usually basso but
soprano when we needed
a change of register
to help us grasp
the complex narrative
with no people in it,
only the sounds,
their loves, their marriages.**

23 January 2024

=====

**Then it was then
but he struggled free
but never got
all the way to now.**

**That is how
history works,
I mean opera,
the long, long
,usic of our muscles.**

23.I.24

=====

**Sometimes the title
comes later,
now blank page of snow.**

23.1.24 *lune*

=====

The shape of what
I am trying to say
is beginning to come
to a shape I begin to see stretching
out in front of me
like the Wakarusa bottom lands in
Kansas— oh you don't know what
they look like so
let us say instead stretches
like the grassroots of Nebraska or
maybe you haven't been there,
maybe only know
other books of the words
of other people talking

about their horizons
eo what can I say then
of what I always see
stretched out in front of me
an inherent energy building beauty,
rising and falling
I think what I see
in front of me
is what I have to write
or what I write
has to be what I see
in front of me
and what do I see
when I close my eyes
I see the sea —
so that's it that's what

**I've been trying to tell you
or it's been trying to tell me—
I have to write the sea.**

24 January 2024

=====

**Is it up to me
to tell you
who you are
when I say you?**

**Or is there a way
you can understand
yourself without a mirror
without the dusty
mirror of my words?**

**Who are you— I know
but I won't tell
because I would need**

**words to tell
and all my words
seem as if meant
for someone else.**

24.1,24

= = = = =

**Once in Clermont
years ago a few
tiny white flowers
came up through the snow.
Years ago but maybe
to see that once
was enough for years to come,
a flower speaking in the snow.**

24.1.24

=====

**Gifts sink into life,
snow seeps into the ground.**

**Its seeming is mostly
gone this morning
after a night in the 40s
but what it is, remains.**

**The fact that we can't see it
means now it is completely ours.**

25 January 2024

=====

**In a world where
nothing is easy
relax, be
part of the problem.**

25.1.24

= = = = =

**He was explaining the tide
to his son, his arms
making big circles overhead.
The kid looked a little scared
as if what stirred at his feet
were the same as the sky
and down could no longer
be trusted not to be up.**

25.1.24

=====

The substance seen,
crossing the line
briefly into Arkansas,
substance of what is seen,
road, fox at the edge,
car we're in, we skim
of the rim of things
trying to be nowhere,
or where some 16th century
shows a woman we don't know
in a room we will ever enter—
there, that is the place.

25.I.24

=====

**Wool of the witch
pulled over my eyes,
she was someone seen once
at the water fountain
in the lobby of the Gem
on Fulton and Crescent,
local movie house, pronounce
the-AY-ter to get
the image right. She had bent
to drink and now stood tall
watching some noisy boys
by the candy counter.
How could she do this to me,
never saw her before or again,**

**such power a standing
person has just by being
there, not speaking, not even
looking. Witch or wizard,
angel or other, in all the force
of standing there, never
remembered, never forgotten.**

25.1.24

== ==

**You didn't have to see
the grasslands dance so
gently around its base
to know the mountain
was a holy thing,
that knowledge is built in.**

**Sacred, the Romans said,
any power good or ill
beyond the ordinary,
beyond government control.
A mountain, say,
there before us,**

**busy with its own vision,
changing very little
of at all if we manage
to linger long enough
to notice anything at all.**

26 January 2024

= = = = =

**Gladsome
was the word once,
gone into hiding now,
in the baseboards
of our vocabulary,
time's mice, nice
to see one now and then,
to know we;re not alone.**

26.I.24

== ==

**Orion pastures —
I have plowed this sky
so many years
that I have learned
to think of myself
as someone actually
here. It is not easy
to be here, or just to be.**

26.I.24

=====

**At least I can look
at the trees.
And when they sing
in the wise, soft
mezzo-soprano of
the skinniest branches
I can imagine hearing them.
And what else is music
but imagining what you hear
is really there?**

26 January 2024

=====

**Pick a word
you never used before,
unscrew the cap
and squeeze gently.
A little meaning oozes out.
A day you do this
is a day well spent—
Make sure you tell
people what you've found.**

27 January 2024

=====

**Are there such things as
good habits?
Go out, ask a tree.**

27.1.24 *lune*

= = = = =

**Strange dark clouds—
not clouds, smoke
from ancient altars
that never quite
made it to the sky.**

27.1.24

= = = = =

**forget it for a while
then let it come
back to mind
fresh laundered
by the dark.**

27.1.24

=====

**If I told you
what's on my mind
it wouldn't be
there any more—
then where would I be?**

27.1.24

POWER OF THE PRECISE

for M.I.

**Some day you will draw
a drop of water
all by itself, no glass
or plate or lover's skin
for it to ride on,
just the drop alone,
cool, tremulous with light.
Beneath your pencil
the drawn line itself
will morph into sphericity,
lucidity, and the quivering
so natural to water will**

**migrate to the eye
of the beholder, the way
beauty so often
brings us close to weeping,
you know, the way
lines of your poems can.**

27 January 2024

=====

**The skin of your back
is the map of a country
the secret country
from which you come.
You can't see it
but you sense it's there
pressing you forward
but always, always
tugging you back.**

**when things are difficult
here and they always are,
that skin-mapped landscape
is where you want to be,**

**a secret country
from which you come
the one you think
that only you can know
yet the only one you cannot
even see, much less
travel to because
it's always behind you.**

**Pray to a mirror to
look into your eyes
and you can glimpse
some shimmer of it,
surprise, sometimes
all the rest of us
know it even better than you,**

**we come from the same place too
and we too can never go back.**

**Or can we? Is that
what the map means,
reaching out
to another person
the same as going home?**

28 January 2024

=====

**Watch the small boulder
roll down the hill,
splash into the stream.**

**Instantly it looks as if
it has been there,
right there since the last
Ice Age, which in this neighborhood
was
not so long ago—**

**at least that's how it feels
in these young trees,
in the silence of the people**

**you see walking
along the side of the road,
their eyes looking around
vaguely startled by where we are.**

28 January 2024

= = = = =

**Why is the ecosystem
of the Brazilian jungle
like the Vienna Philharmonic?**

**close your eyes,
imagine the clouds
floating over the sea
and listen hard—
I think you'll understand.**

28.1.24

AFTER THE OPERATION

**I'm not the man
I never was
But now I know it.**

18.1.24

== ==

**Respond to the river
tell her it snowed
in the night and left
snow on the ground
but scattered,
flat lawn green
but hillocks white,**

**patchwork, like the sheets
and scraps of ice
'floating downstream
on her the other day.**

**I have never seen
a snowfall like this,
as if we were all
on our way somewhere.**

29 January 2024

=====

**Canopy over sacred well?
Nyet, snow on gazebo roof.
But I want everywhere
to be a church, and every
hill Mount Athos.
Indulge me, o temporary real,
let me worship far and wide,
every passerby an angel,
every word the Word of God.**

29.I.24

== ==

1.

**From Dunleary shore once
we saw across the sea
a bulbous greyish shape
momently then gone.
What was it? Not a beast,
not a whale, more like
a smaller England rising
then retreating.**

2.

**Otherness
can be a long time coming.
We stayed where we were,**

**beach folk of the moment,
not saying much but knowing
time has something in store
for this place, whoever we are.**

29 January 2024

=====

**Somewhere in my heart
there is a porch in summer,
old house in the country
near where two roads fork.**

**My father is sitting there
on an upright chair, bare-
headed, smoking a cigar.
And looking, just looking.**

**Nor speaking, not asking,
not changing anything at all.
He sees a few cars go by,
smiles at a passing jogger,**

**watches the blue smoke drift
away into the yew trees.
I still yearn to learn his lesson.**

29 January 2024

=====

**I read a poem,
it went on too long,
all a story needs
is to begin-_
set it free,
it has a thousand
endings of its own.**

30 January 2024

== == == == ==

**Lovers' embraces
smell of underarm.
This is a good thing.
Otherwise, we might float away
and ne'er be found. But here I am.**

30.I.24

=====

**Emboldened by Eiffel
cities started leaping
into the air, now even
Gubai speaks French—
and wasn't Chicago the first
to try to escape from earth
but keep the money?
Skyscrapers! Scratches
in the skin of heaven.
All we get from them
is long shadows. And elevators.**

30.I.24

=====

**The wall of water
remembers.
Don't ask me how,
but whisper to it
and your voice will linger,
I hear you still
as I walk by the stream.**

31 January 2024

=====

**Snow unannounced
in the night,
just a little
shimmer now on
non-absorbent
surfaces. And we
all have white cars.**

31,I.24

= = = = =

**Yellow philosophy,
red theology,
blue music?
Is that what it all
is about? Now
take out your crayons
in this green world.**

31.I.24

=====

**Sometimes it's close
enough to touch
or inhale the shape
as it passes by.
Mostly it's as far away
as I am from myself.**

31.I.24

=====

**You know that old
church they broke down?
Go fetch an organ pipe
from its lost instrument.
Use it as a telescope
lifted to the cloudy sky,
tell me what you hear
and I'll try to write it down.
We have to save something
from what worshippers believed,
if only a vowel to
build a true word around.**

31.I.24

= = = = =

**Measure the meadow?
Never. Space
means breathing.
Count the grass blades
if you must number,
but leave the long alone.
This stretch to the far-
off spruce trees on the ridge
is to help us breathe.**

31.I.24

== ==

**Snow gone
except on the top
of railings and fences,
frontiers of countries
we forgot were even here.**

31.I.24

