

2-2024

February 2024

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February 2024 1

= = = = =

**Sin me, sin me
break the chokehold
of grammar me
he is as it will be
being me as she would
say to me: see me.**

1 February 2024

February 2024 2

=====

**Walking around the neighborhood
I look at all the places
once lived me
and wonder why
can I not find a trace
of me here except my soul
standing here
pizzled yet again
by what passes.**

1.II.24

=====

February 2024 3

Communication

from the stone:

Sit on me, listen.

1 February n2024, *lune*

=====

**Rabbits run faster]today
and the woodchuck
wakes tomorrow.**

**What are we doing
to coax Primavera
out of her fleece
and be our spring?**

**Do we tag along with weather,
try to dance to music
we ca n't even hear?**

1.11.24

====

He should never have opened the album. After ten minutes of peering at fading snapshots and Polaroids he realizes that we become, permanently, whatever any image of us shows, if once we actually see it.

There may be other shapes of me that are not me, because I have not seen them. He smiles then, a little sourly, at the faint legalistic flavor of his conclusion,

as if he; only an ad for himself. *I am as represented.* And who are these

February 2024 6

**other people in the pictures? Do
they even now know who they are?**

1.II.24

=====

The palace was all around us. We thought it was ruins, but we heard music. Where is it coming from? Nobody around. No boats on the river. Just a few sheets of ice floating slow. I know ice can crackle, but can it sing? What we heard sounded like voices, cellos, ordinary strings. Nothing unusual about it except except its source. We saw a staircase down into a crypt, but down there empty as up here. Do people bring music with them, somehow bottled up until the place, the Place, opens

February 2024 8

**the flask and music flows? And why
were we the only people here today?
Whose palace had this been?**

1.II.24

February 2024 9

= = = = =

**Mirror talk:
you can't keep
laughing forever
at the same joke.**

1.II.24

= = = = =

**Is it all right
if we just sit here
and listen
to what the ocean says?
My mother taught me how,
she would sit for an hour two,
smiling when sometimes
a swan floated by.**

1 February 2024

=====

Yet waiting for it
is earnest too,
A worshipful calm
like the warm
arm of a friend.

2.

Don't go.
Linger because.
If they all say so
there must be someplace
else, thus proving
here is really here.

3.

**But don't fuss with proof.
Geology is theology,
shluss, like the rabbi said,
no more to be said.**

4.

**So then you tasted wine
and stopped wondering.
Then you stopped drinking
and started to pray.
So many prayers
to so many sense of deity,
baseball cards from ancient**

February 2024 13

**temples, river otters,
waking late to hear
crows' impatient sermons.**

2 February 2024

February 2024 14

====

**Could I feel enough
to call it feeling,
or say enough
to have said something?**

2.11.24

= = = = =

**The Bach listens to me
from its radio, hears
my doubt, insists
that heaven is right here
now, not by being
beautiful or good
but by being.**

**The glory comes
when music hears you
and lets you know
you have been heard.**

2.II.24

=====

**The real purpose of religion
is to elicit your identity
from the mere facts.
Without it, people might
turn into their bare selves.
There must be more
to me than some self.**

2.11.24

====

I keep wanting to talk
about the Baltic,
small sea with so
many languages.

I mean walk by it,
hearing them conversing
or dozing under the ice
as they were when once
I tenderfoot on the rim.

But I find peace close
to any water, Hudson,

February 2024 18

**Yamuna, Thames or our
dear Matambesen.**

**Water does it all
just by moving. I always
want to walk alongside
this so reliable friend.**

2.11.24

SCRIPTORIUM

where the monks
wrote with quills
broad and slender
on parchment or vellum
words, mostly words
of other people
but sometimes their own
or a picture in the margin,
to fix the meaning,
like a little duck with
quek neatly beside her
to show us how words
are supposed to sing.

3 February 2024

=====

**Not flowers, not rivers,
not boyfriends and girlfriends,
not birds, not kittens
or tigers or dragons,
though dragons come closer,
not music, no flutes or guitars,
not wine, not daydreams,
not government, not churches,
temples, pirate ships, not even
the feeling of skin upon skin.
So what is there left to say?
Only the breath of every day.**

3.II.24

February 2024 21

= = = = =

**In the old circus
a little car would roll in
and clown after clown
after clown would get out,
impossibly many,
fat and thin, tall and short
and the car would keep giving.
And so we learned young
contents always more
than the container. Look
in the mirror and remember**

3 February 2024

February 2024 22

= = = = =

**In this new place
the word says different,
North Persian carpets,
soda bottles, drink
your fill of carbonated
Priestly water wasn't it?**

**Glamor is an Irish word
I wonder why. When water
spills on Turkish rugs
it nourishes the flowers
within, Fact. Taste me
if you don't believe me**

but I won't let you,
will I? Wait and see
as the oak tree said
to the wild boar
rooting around
for acorns, but I'll
make do with mushrooms
the pig explained—
and pigs don't know how to lie.

Which brings me to the point
at issue here, milady,
each place has a word to say,
yea, inch by inch
over the long world
that word changes,

February 2024 24

**shadows tickle the ground,
the word giggles out,**

**our only excuse for being
here is hearing it.**

**This bright pagan
Sunday has begun.**

4 February 2024

=====

Larcenous logic
snatched the joy away
murmuring about contingency,
impermanence, proof.
I raised the glass of seltzer
anyhow, frisson
of its sparkle on the tongue,
its cool investigation
of the throat. Sometimes
thinking is the enemy of thought.

4.11.24

February 2024 26

=====

**I guess I was
a sort of Anabaptist then,
everything has to be done again
at least to make it done at all.
but since then I've learned
there's no such place as again.
Glance out the window,
let the cars go by,
those endless decimals
of someone trying to stand still.**

4.11.24

February 2024 27

= = = = =

**Sit back and think
about things:
faucets, fractions, butternut
squash. There,
don't you feel better already?**

4.11.24

February 2024 28

= = = = =

**In Lambeth once
I saw a figure rise up
from the river
and it was me. I tried
to tell my analyst but
got distracted by the stones
in the pathway to his house
and so forgot to knock.
I guess eventually the river
will tell me who I am.**

4.11.24

February 2024 29

== =

**You had a friend from Madagascar,
and one from the Hebrides.
Thank God I came from
an island too
so you would marry me.**

5 February 2024

=====

The brother of Solomon's youngest wife was sent south into Egypt to study and learn.

He came back with hundreds of detailed drawings of urban housing, water supplies, sanitation, temple building, traffic patterns. These were given to corps of engineers, who translated them into language, words some of which you can still read or hear in Jerusalem.

5.II.24, dreamt

February 2024 31

=====

**A word unspoken,
door left locked.
To hear is the key.**

5.II.24,*i lune*

====

hope for the engine—
we all have one.
I mean we are one,
charging all night
in what we delud
ourselves by calling sleep.
And truly, truly
when the Sun comes up
we are able, please,
to answer what she says.

5.II.24

====

**Consonant revelry
a city in Georgia.
Who needs vowels?
We have birds.**

5.II.24

=====

Ridge of trees
equivalent.
Nine sisters
slender-twigged
to foil he wind.
Narrowness wins all.

5 February 2024

=====

**Sun so bright
seems dust in the eyes
blink blink
halfway to heaven.**

2.

**Used to talk ordinary
then the bird.
Spent years trying
to learn to chirp in English.**

3.

**Petals of orchid
let light through.**

**When I look at you I see
light coming through you
on its way to all of us.**

4.

**Eyelids quiver
in the storm of light,
try to blink away the night,
morning anthem
in the church of light,
everything coated in gold
as if everything seen
is made of the same.**

6 February 2024

=====

**Wipe the window clean,
win the prize
of seeing out
with indoor eyes.**

6.II.24

= = = =

**Exhaust the opposition
by studious agreements.
Say yes to everything
then one big No. U know
what I'm talking about,
don't you? The hero dies,
the music stops, the curtain
falls but everyone applauds.
What kind of place is this?**

6.11.24

=====

**Wanting to catch
the morning he
pulled off his socks
and ran on the grass.
Was he a bird beginning
or something more?**

2.

**Abbots and abbesses
played in his head
with do this and do that
until he did.**

3.

But grass was cool
so even as
doubting less he ran.

4.

When he told her after
what he'd done
she said he had to hear
her words as another
language too.
“We all speak twice
whenever we say..”

5.

**So back, bed,
and let the sunrise go
do its work
to you to noon.**

6.

**Humble makes nimble,
so he stretched out again
and let the day do him
precise as a dream.**

7 February 2024

====

Bright as it is
couldn't say more,
pirate ship, wall
of rushes made,
noise aloft?
Swiss village?
Inside each
child's head
these cymbals clash,
why we need metal
our only other.

7.II.24

=====

**What if there were no,
no frontiers at all
and the local sheriff
the only boss?**

**It must
have been that way once
before we came up
with dubious notion
of pretending to decide
who decides for us**

**so the bosses get bigger,
hot air balloons**

**ever further frp, us,
bigger and further away.**

**I don't even know
the mayor's mother,
let alone the governor's
last weekend date.**

7.11.24

=====

**Shrugging shoulders
turns out to be
good exercise—
those old guys knew.**

7.II.24

CARTOON

Cat on the keyboard
mouse on the strings—
remember?

Why does everything
always answer us?

7.11.24

=====

**Let us name our child
Oblivia. Forgetting
is such a potent force
in our neurology,
forgetting the pain or
discomfort after
it goes away. She
will help us know more
by knowing less.**

7.11.24

=====

She rang the doorbell. Full of doubt she rang it again. The door opened. As she came in and said hello she wondered how she could you find out whether they heard the first bell ring or was it the second that worked. Was one enough or two necessary Is once ever enough?

7.11.24

=====

**It takes a pound of inches
just to reach the road
but when you travel on it
yet every footstep
takes you to a new place,
around the corner
a city you have never seen,
might pass without noticing
just as you did that one
behind your left shoulder
a minute ago — now where
do you think you're going**

7.II.24

= = = = =

**Blackout on the telescope
you'll never know
who that was running
on the hill, four legs,
silver hair.**

8 February 2024

=====

**Getting there and being there—
night and day.**

**Come some
time a different road
and see. Or be.**

**Clay on your fingers,
hum on your breath.**

Yes, you built this wall.

8.11.24

=====

**What's left of me is
words. They are
all I ever was.**

8.11.24, *lune*

=====

**I'm allowed a bit
of despair
if kept to myself.**

8.11.24

=====

**Radio. Skater's Waltz?
Woodchuck tumbling
in her first sun.
How can we hear
what is si far away
and long gone?
Time is full of tricks.
She finds a cookie
on the lawn, eats it,
the world is new, finds
another, this is happiness,
causeless effects
and a melody too.**

8.II.24

=====

Overture to an ending—
all a matter of how
long reality takes.
Or lasts. Play it again.

8.11.24

=====

Scratch marks on old silver,
I never knew a grandparent,
a wooden baton, silver
fork. But many names.
Is a name enough to know
or call out in the night?
Do we too exist by inference?

8.11.24

=====

**Work comes first
and nothing second.
Inscribe it on your opera house
your cathedrals.
Ambiguity saves lives.**

8.II.24

=====

Short breath these days,
let me suck some
from the bones, I need
a long song to offer you,
long enough to keep you
humming the first theme
and wishing it would stop
developing, this is not
Rachmaninoff you say,
stop fiddling on my keys.
And I agree, secretly pleased
to pause for breath,
But that song starts again,
dammit, no one can sing it,

February 2024 59

**and why should they, seeing
or saying it's all ip to me?
Cannibal song, it eats me alive—
is this my breath or another's?
Now it's out in the open:
O sing with your breath**

8 February 2024

=====

**Why not a window—
with that you
get everything else.**

**A door is better
as long as
you can keep it shut.**

9 February 2024 *lune*

=====

**When people come
shoving their shopping carts
(French calls them chariots)
hurrying through weather
towards their car
they are most themselves,
least concerned with
how they seem, just
anxious to do and move and be.**

**I watch from my cozy SUV
and see and see.
Parking lots strip
all oretense away,**

**we don't even notice
we're being noticed.
Trees are planted
here and there to
coach us in serenity.**

9.11.24

=====

The orchids are pointing
at me today,
our courtroom of a dining room
seethes with accusations.
What does this pale flower
allege of me, is it praising
or blaming my neglect.
Should I change my seat
or move the flower pot?
No, I'll wit and listen—
it's the only thing
I really know how to do.

9.11.24

=====

After three days and a morning
the cloud has come again.

If it were Saturday
they'd send an opera
but today we have to go
fish for one from Cyberland—

what music would suit this calm pale
almost spring-like Friday?
nothing sad but nothing funny,

maybe *Jerusalem Set Free*—
not top-drawer Verdi

February 2024 65

**but a dreamy anthem in it
wipe your eyes
and forward march to liberty.**

9.11.24

=====

The flower turned
into a farm girl
hopping over a fence
into the green field
where her cow was waiting.
But then it turned into the cow
waiting for the girl
I waiting for what she would tel,I
who tell whom? flowers
always full of information,
cows, causes, muses,
you know all that,
we all know that,

February 2024 67

**that's why we like flowers
so much. especially this flower
actually a young woman climbing the
steps to a temple in a land we have
never heard of
but we live actually in always.
happy, wise as this orchid.**

9/10.II.24

= = = = =

The wharfinger
rules the moorings,
we pay deep to stand still
pay him so we can step
ashore on a new idea.
Who?

2.
thinking
is a rowboat
with a missing oar,
left swing right swing
till you find the current
but then you belong to it.

3.

**Between atmosphere and
hydrosphere
we are caught
like a half-remembered dream,
you're sure it happened
but how did it end?**

4.

**Praise the ocean,
stay ashore,
let the current come to you,
watch thoughts pass**

where they can do no harm.
Tremble, little kitten,
just a little.

5.
We are built
of repetition
in variation.
Forget the latter
and you lose Mozart,
the avant-garde tried
to rescue us, then
bad art turns vision
into again again,
the world as wallpper.

6.

**So growled the sea
once day in my head
when I was too far
away to hear its actual surf.**

7.

**The interior translator
reads trees and seas.
This is an ad for human life.**

10 February 2024

=====

**Little turtle
I knew once
taught me dirt,
how to fumble down
a little under.
Down there a separate
dig just a little to discover,
and bring air in with me,
and a little light.
Journey to the center,
come back for supper.**

10.II.24

February 2024 73

=====

**Thank goodness for money
so I cab give it
instead of giving me.**

10.II.24

=====

How often have you sat
in company thinking
of something else,
the plausible rattle
of their language
letting you move deeper
into those woods
till you see or almost
see moving in the trees
the aqift pale animal
of what you mean?

10.II.24

====

**That brick wall
a dictionary made of dirt.
Only at first
do all the letters look the same.
Cherish the differences
means learning to read,**

10.II.24

February 2024 76

FEAST OF SAN GENNARO

**The band passed by
but the music stayed.
What a joy it is sometimes
to have a brain.**

10.II.24

=====

**If there were another
way of doing this,
icicle daangling in a tree,
say, or moonbeam
on your glass of water,
but as it is, this game
is mostly asking questions.
So when you close your eyes
you won't know who's
near you, so ask away.**

11 February 2024

=====

**Some specific words
have many too many meanings.
I am the worst of them
and you come next.**

11.II.24

=====

**The Marquis of Mockery
used to drive his old Bentley
up and down my streets.
Then I got religion,
raised his rent, urged him out.
I miss the old devil sometimes
when I get too serious
and start to preach.
I hear him snicker
even as he tips his hat.**

11.II.24

=====

1.

Clatter in the pantry,
jabber in the parlor,
I used to know a song
like that but it went away.

2.

Sweden the postcard came from
when next I heard,
busy forests and time to think
or so I thought.
Then I read the scribble
and understood.

Anywhere is far enough
away, distance
is the deepest music.

3.

So sometimes I feel
like a spelling error
in a simple text,
annoying as it says its piece.
Who said anything
about meaning?
Who made me a mistake?

4.

Revenge of the island—
surround us with

what we cannot be.
O I know about ships
and submarines,
but a boat is just
an island with no messing,
no selfhood, no rock.

6.
So genuine your nest
and line with feathers.
I have no more to say
but it won't keep me from talking.

11.II.24

=====

**Reprehensible monolith
this nose on my face,
why are we si many planets
all rock and mush and vegetation
tumbling around an absent sun?
Maybe they feared that up there
and turned themselves all
into Jupiter. Or Mars.**

11.II.24

=====

**Too many folds
in this curtain,
too many caves
in this hillside,
so many things are lost,
the sunray wrapped in organdy.**

11.II.24

= = = = =

**Send me and me
and me to the opera
so I can sing,
identity is a chorus
slow learning to chant.**

12 February 2024

=====

**A woman in France
wears dresses made of books
as if to say positively
read them and don't read me.**

12.II.24

=====

**Met Eisenhower once,
his copter landed
in my back yard,
A friendly man,
friendlier than Kennedy
but he was retired now
and JFK had just
begun to turn the wheel.
Hope age teaches kindness, yes?**

12.II.24

=====

Sleep wanted a lot of me last night, ten hours and drowsy after. And dreams intricate with irrelevance, lost texts, failed grammar, pointless lectures I had to give but at least when an old man told me this ia a Hewish holy day I had the sense to answer in Yiddish Every day is holy.

12.II.24

=====

**Tomorrow?
Snow on Mardi Gras?
Sometimes I think
I should hide myself
inside a coconut,
walled safe in sweetness.
But there are worse
things than snow—
consider the music passing by.**

12.II.24

= = = = =

**Men in space helmets
kick a ball
that doesn't roll
and isn't round.
But this is far from the only
thing I don't understand.**

12.II.24

== ==

**Scrapings from the bottom
of the barrel, yes, I admit.
But that's where the essence
lingers so long
after the herrig or pickles
or old red wine are gone.**

12.II.24

=====

**Live in an angle,
mother floor and
father wall until
you get your breath back
and you're loud as you
can be but never
abandon your mother–
voices come from underground.**

12.II.24

=====

**On a street in Boston
someone put a sign up
that says *To the Beach*
and says it in Gaelic.
The sign points inland—
your Irish know a trick or two.**

12,11.24

February 2024 94

=====

**Tired of talking,
I want to go
back to bed
and let it talk to me.**

12.II.24=

= == = = =

1.

**I see Claire
loping down the hill
with a whole
flower in her lips,
white flower, fluffy flower,
smile in her eyes.**

2.

**I see that flowers
can roam around too,
they just need**

us to be their steeds,
their colors
the words in our mouths.

3.

I see that hillsides
can be kindly,
gravity on her side
as she hurries
almost effortlessly
down to meet
her friend
holding the camera
steady in mind.

13 February 2024

====

**What does a man do
when he gets tired
of being now? Why, he
picks up a pencil
and writes something down.
By the time he's finished
now will be done.**

13.II.24

WWII

Germany lost the war.

We won.

US lost the Philippines.

UK lost India, Burma,

Malaysia et cetera.

Germany lost only the war.

13.II.24

=====

Why wait any longer?

**The wolf has come
to the door and even he
got tired of waiting
and is gone.**

**Where is he trotting now
and will he come back?**

Danger lies in asking questions.

13.II.24

== ==

**Use the old music
to make a new opera.
New tires on old car.
But you still need gasoline.**

13.II.24

= = = = =

**Catch with a net
hurts them less.
Let them go
your soul to bless.
I wanted to hum
this hymn at fishermen
then I remembered
the lox on my toast.**

13.II.24

=====

**Everyone you meet
in the desert or on the street
has something to tell you.
Don't ask but listen hard.**

13.II.24

=====

Midnight coming close—
sunshine just
sequins on her gown.

13.II.24, *lune*

=====

for T.M.

Water is like that—
when you stare at it
moving or still
you feel this is true,
water is always the same,

all over the world
this river runs, this creek
this fjord this sea—

and language is like that too, that
ocean of saying

February 2024 105

**its waves and currents make me
think that every word I say
might get heard, one fine day
heard here and there
but mostly this very day
and I hope by you.**

14 February 2024

A VALENTINE

for Charlotte

**I look so often
at that ridge of trees
shimmering in winter sunlight
and try to hear them,
learn what I should know.
And often I try to answer,
say something into the air
that they'll sometime hear.
But then I realize it's you
I'm talking to, my true love.
and it's your love speaks all
the understanding there can be.**

14 February 2024

=====

Sea glass

**a little Blue ridge
from Church's Beach
from a bottle maybe
spring water
found its way here.**

**The shard of glass, edges softened by
waves**

**by sand erosion,
maybe the light itself
shining through it
as I hold it in my hands.**

**I think about the places
it has been, where I have been**

**on the way to meet it here.
let sun shine through
us both where the beach
stretches all round us
and the sea stretches out
where we both have been found.**

13/14.II.24

=====

**Something to do with winter,
with pressure, with
following a woman
up the stairs, trying
to recall a name, hating
the left right left right
tyranny of the steps,
our steps, getting there
at all, listening bravely to
the sermon of the empty room.**

14 February 2024

= = = = =

**Listen to the paper,
it was printed while you slept
so must know things you don't.
But what you learned in sleep
is probably truer. Even newer.**

14.II.24

=====

**Why his day,
beaten to death
for his love of God,
why do we send his heart
to the girl next door?
We keep trying to
figure out where God lives.**

14.II.24

= = = = =

**Move the flower
into the light,
its other mother.
I know my place—
only animals need fathers.**

14.II.24

=====

**Look at the last page first,
read it if I dare.**

**Let the end choose
its own beginning—
that's what I'm here for.**

14.II.24

= = = = =

**When did he sing
this wind that
soothes the bare trees?
Who was he then,
holding what in his hands?**

14.II.24

====

**If you make a wish
make your will
in case it comes true.**

**14.II.24, *lune*
Rhinebeck**

====

**This very ascent
be careful how you spell it
climbs to an overlook
like that spot on the Escarpment
from which you can see
six states. In good weather.**

2.

**Moral Mountain
is a brass band of a place,
even a piccolo of anxiety
carries for miles.
And guilt drones on and on,
wind in the caves.**

3.

**So linger with us commoners,
I guess. Or brave it,
guessing everything as you go
until the rabbi in the heart
says Pause now, let
the world catch up with thee.**

15 February 2024

=====

**Resilient? Brazilian?
what did he say?
Something about rain
forests going away.**

15.II.24

=====

**Let your dog
fetch the paper in.
Let him read it too—
he'll tell you all
you need to know.**

15.II.24

=====

**Call it a ceremony,
I call it walking
to the car and then,
thus, being somewhere else
the daily service
to the unknown god.**

2.

**Back roads are best,
more green priests
along the way, rare
acolytes trudging along
lost in their own liturgy.**

3.

**I do this every day I can,
elsewhere is a verb
I understand,**

**I verb it when I can,
then sing the sweetest
objecr, home.**

4.

**I confess too much—
simple-minded,
I jabber complex
up Olympus.**

5.

**Noises in the cellar,
tummy rumble, thunder?**

**I stand at the mirror
and give my orders:**

**Grow up, child, it's
not all about you.**

6.

**But my image dares
to contradict!
So I wet my fingertip
and run it down the glass**

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**so the mirror squeals.
The image laughs,
and finally agrees.
I think I may have made a friend.**

15.II.2024

=====

The subway is getting
dangerous these days.
Even up here, at the West
Two-Thousand and Ninth
Street station, I can hear
the rumble of approaching fear.
Fear flows upriver. I'm worried
for the girl across the aisle
fingering her rosary
or rolling a forbidden cigarette.

15.II.24

=====

**Not all words beginning
al- are from Arabic.
Alarm for instance,
or alight, alleviate,
align. Now why
am I bothering you
with this? Or me?
Sand in my eyes, desert wind.**

16 February 2024

AFTER THE GAME

**When the field is finally empty
the real game begins.**

**Thirty thousand people
leave the stadium,**

and in each of them

the real game goes on

infinite variations,

thirty thousand fields at once.

As the wise man remarked: Things

only happen so we

have something to remember.

16.II.24

=====

As if there were more of me
I sent one of me
into battle, boardroom,
lawyer's den.
I stood outside the door
and listened to me arguing,
in good English
but no results. I sent
another me in, this one
soaked in theology.
Silence. I stormed in
but the room was empty.

16.II.24

=====

**Bluebirds, late winter,
everything
seems under control.**

16.II.24, *lune*

=====

**Lune while I still can—
the numbers
may change as we count.**

16.II.24, *lune*

====

**Of course matter thinks—
how else could
we think without it?**

17 February 2024, *lune*

=====

Patience has another side,
a school in tatters,
meadow full of cars.

Admit it, we came here to learn—
nothing else to do
in this jostling place,
everybody stealing
everybody else's song.

2.

And right they should.

Education means appropriation—
what did I ever do for Dante
who did so much for me?

3.

**So whistle my wisdom
all you like, little other
on your way to being
bigger than me.**

**We are spiders
on the blackboard
feeling along,
trying to tell up from down.**

17.II.2024

=====

**Call them messengers,
they come up out of earth
and wave colors at us.
Capisce? we used to say
in Brooklyn, do you get it,
do you get what they're saying?
We tried, often got to hear
because we had flowers too.**

17.II.24

=====

**Nothing to say
so here it is,
a placebo of a manifesto
and in sunshine too.
I keep blaming people,
money-men and governments
for not wanting beauty,
for juke boxes that sound
like cash registers, forgive
those obsolete words,
I'm a part of the problem too,
Olson in Gloucester,
Venus in Aquarius.
And yet the crows survey**

**the snowfield carefully–
something here for everyone.**

2.

**This is the forgiveness ode,
never stop looking,
never stop worrying.**

**Worry is the raccoon's claws
that cling, that climb the tree.**

3.

**Will you believe me, though?
I am talking to all the detached
citizens of me.**

**Come along and doubt
in my parlor,**

we'll drink elderberry juice
together, pretend
we're in Vienna, and
oh the music!

4.

Rich symphony
of things as they are
or even as they seem.
Turn off the engines,
conserve water, let
lassitude leach anxiety away.
Next time worry comes
flouncing in, greet
her with a smile.

18 February 2924

=====

**We all in orbit
each of us
tries to find the sun.**

18.II.24, *lume*

=====

**Holiday used to be holy day.
Now we waste our time
on a mispronunciation.**

18.II.24

=====

**What the lily said
when the wind
whipped water on her
was calm, philosophical.
Maybe she even liked it—
thirst is universal.
Monet tries to tell us so.**

18.II.24

=====

**Now what?
The wind went away.
Bow to the now.**

**Don't be silly—
which one,
you're in another
one already.**

**Bow to the orchid them
and the candle flame,
the msn next door**

February 2024 141

**and the polar bear–
your choice, they're your
hands joined in prayer.**

19 February 2024

= = = = =

**The sinner is
the sheep who leads a shepherd
into the bad place
to guide it home.**

2.

**The sinner is the song
the peddler sings
to keep the coins rolling
along the tattered bench
of world economy.
Just try to prove me wrong.
Please.**

3.

**The sinner is the shadow
the sunlight casts
on all who turn
their back to her.**

4.

**Back to the sheep,
back to the flock
they walk, his hands
ruffling tender in its wool,
back to the murmuring herd,
the everlasting sermon
of the others' breaths.**

19.II.24

=====

Flowers? Fluent.

Hours? Not so fast.

Girders? Choose your steel.

**Everything is on the way,
traffic dense along the coast.
Odd sounds from the interior.**

19.II.24

=====

**All you have to do
is stand on the sidewalk
long enough
and something will happen.
As with everything else
the best advice is always
wear comfortable shoes.**

19.II.24

= === = = =

**Are you near yet,
are you here yet,
is the bonnet on your hair?**

**We're all waiting
we're all praying
that your breath will warm us
on this winter day.**

**We are aged children
and we need our other.**

19.II.24

=====

**Inner apple–
tastes like that
opera by Meyerbeer.
Remember how music
used to taste
when you're young?
Not the story–the stories
are all pretty much the same.
Only the song is different.**

19.II.24

=====

**Sometimes the painting
fades but the canvas lasts.
What does that try to
tell us about the Pyramids?**

19.II.24

=====

Wait for the wizard,
he's bound to be close—
check the upstairs closet
where I hang my ties,
the silks and tartans
typically enthrall him,
ah, we're all such slaves
to color. The closet door
will be a little open
to let in some light—tap
gently and call his name
softly if you remember it.

19.II.24

=====

**We had a neighborhood
then there was sun,
peach tree, green tomatoes,
wooden fence, no dog.
Then we had religion,
Sunday sermons in Sicilian,
pale brick walls, empty steps,
vacant lots, the sea.**

**Then we had a city
vaguely to the north,
walk five blocks and find
the last subway stop of all.
And hen we had time**

**or something like
we remember, something
that never changes,
still feels just like
a long autumn afternoon.**

20 February 2024

====

**Phone, don't ring,
door, don't knock,
hinge, don't squeak,
I want some time alone
to feel sorry for myself
since nobody calls me,
nobody comes, I'll get by—
paradoxes make us strong.**

20.II.24

= = = = =

**Bless the willow,
reassure the branch,
shadow means sunshine
and sun means soon.**

20.II.24

= = = = =

**One day the virgin
spoke to her son:
come away from
your father's bench,
you have better
tools to play with.**

20.II.24

=====

I keep envisioning
the thing I'm supposed to write,
it stretches out
long and wide, boring as sand
if you don't bend to touch it,
squeeze it. And the sea mist
is cool as you breathe it in,
so for a moment the roar
of the freeway behind you
might even be the language
of going somewhere. Or even being
raptly where you are.

20.II.24

=====

**We are apples
in each other's Eden,
just one taste
and the green dream
vanishes so that we wake
in a vaguely familiar world
ready to make new things.**

20.II.24

===== ***OSSIA:***

**We are apples
in each other's Eden,
One bite is all it takes
to wake us from the green dream
into this morning world
ready to make everything new.**

20/21.II.24

=====

**Now at last
the cymbals clash.
We know what that means
in our fish markets and
meat stalls the oldest
museums, yes, this
is what we ate and what we are.
Don't blame money for this one.**

2.

**In a tomb in Egypt
they found a jar of honey
still edible, still sweet
after two thousand years,**

safe among all the other
stolen goods,
the bees long dead.
We don't even know their names.

3.
We never will
because we never did.
Something tells me
eating is itself a sin,
I heard that from a holy man,
I hear it still from the green
fields of rye and corn.

4.

And the lox and cream cheese
on my toast, tastes so good,
tries to make me forget
the salmon of wisdom
swimming still
under the hazel tree in Donegal.

5.

So as our lives are now
sin is unavoidable it seems.
But maybe some of us
can learn to, try to, atone
till our sobbing summons,

February 2024 161

**sounds like, music.
And over the Hudson
a bald eagle screams.**

21 February 2024

=====

Republican weather
dead rat in the cellar
wait a minute wait
just a minute— this
is no kind of song.

21.II.24

=====

Sometimes I think
somebody else should be
sitting here at these keys
saying something
you can use, democracy or
information at least
whereas I sit here
trying to breathe
a flame from the dying
embers in the hearth of my head.

21.11.24

=====

**Yearning for it—
stretch the door frame
heat the kettle,
God's son is born every day
again for the first time,
listen to his eyes
gleaming from the cradle,
his eyes stay with you,
linger as language,
linger as love.**

21.II.24

= = = = =

He walked out of the wall
so I walked right in—
after waiting a thousand years
why wait ten minutes more?
I sliced a tomato and gobbled it
deep inside the oaken wall.
Some people heard me
but thought I was singing
so they wrote it down, sang it
all over the place, recorded it
and suddenly I was famous
pink juice still wet on my lips.

21.11.24, Red Hook

=====

**Mirror, mirror
on the wall,
I am the ugliest
of them all.**

**No you're not,
no you're not
but you're in the running,
trot, trot, trot.**

21,II.24 Red Hook

= = = = =

Looking for the letter
to stick in between
what you say and
what you mean—
that’s what the teacher
said or quoted and you
went through the alphabet
on hands and knees
hoping the terrain would tell.
But no. Finally beneath
the arches of *m* you came
to rest. Silence is best.

22 February 2024

=====

**Something to share with you,
messieurs, mesdames,
my grandfather's baton.
I hold it before you to see,
I speak with the ancient
authority of wood.**

22.II.24

=====

The generator in the stable
kicks on for its weekly test.
The horses whinny, one
kicks back against the stall
and then relaxes
in the groan of sound.
He has heard worse—
we all have, the crowds
screaming at us to go
faster and be gone.

22.II.24

=====

**Admire me—
I am made of thee,
both of us unfolded
from the northern coast
by a mothering wave.
To love me is to be
true to yourself, true
as language, as water.**

22.II.24

=====

**So you're moving to Italy...
I'll miss you, so far away
on the Adriatic coast.
But in a way you'll sink
even deeper into my life
since I grew up among
people from Abruzzi.
So now when I remember
childhood I'll find you there too,
bright in springtime festivals.**

24.II.24

== ==

**Which alphabet
has the most letters?
Trees. No, I mean human
letters. So why ask me?**

22.II.24

=====

All humans are descended from a battalion of warriors sent to this planet to do battle with an alien race in possession. But by the time we got here, the alien race had gone extinct, we don't know why, climate? plague? In any casem we had nobody left to fight with. Except each other.

22.II.24

=====

The sound of water
as it drips from a cotton
shirt between washtub
and clothesline—
gentle.ample, let
time wring it out.
let time dry it. Where
does water go?
The dry mind gets interested
and follows it
all the way here.

22.II.24

=====

**Got to St Louis
saw the big gold arch
kept going
stopped at a motel
in think Ohio
slept and woke into
wild heavy rain,
first rain I had in a year
and so many many trees
so wet, so wet, I sort
of cried with happiness.**

22.II.24

=====

**And then the beginning.
Everything has to stop
for the beginning to begin.
Silence rubs its gloved
hands and waits.**

**Men for a moment stop
thinking about women.
The fox in the meadow knows
something's going on,
retreats into the dense
shrubbery girdling the woods.
Woodpecker reluctantly**

**postpones his beak.
Priests and scientists
sound asleep. Now
it can really begin.**

23 February 2024

=====

**Cantilevered silences
topple into sound—
the Brahms symphony
jumps forward, full of itself,
scary but beautiful
like a pedigreed dog
lunging at you in the doorway.
You shiver, back away
even while admiring his coat.**

23.II.24

=====

**They moved into the photo
they saw of the house,
felt OK so they bought the place.
A month later they got
to the door, wielded
the old brass key and lo!
casa nova. But something
was different from the photo.
The sea was just as close
but the vestibule was odd,
felt as if other people
still lived there, unseen
but actual. Dust on the table
where they set the key down,**

a clink shivered through space.

Are there people here

before us, or is it our own

ghosts trapped in the house

from the time when

we studied the photo?

Pictures can capture the mind—

is this how it will feel

when we actually live here,

partnering with our hopes,

guesses? Now for the stairs.

Who did sleep up there?

Are they still here?

Will we become the?

The house will decide.

23.II.24

= = = = =

**Flowers on the table
suddenly, who brought them,
who bought them, blossoms
of the money tree
in the invisible garden—
thank you, darling,
for bringing them home,
all the colors of sunshine.**

24 February 2024

=====

So it's one of those questions again, more neurology than history, but what would I have thought as I walked into the room if I hadn't seen the flowers. What would I be writing about right now if I hadn't noticed, or let some other percept slip into mind's morning market place instead? Percept—what a funny word for the real world.

2.

**So what would you have
been reading about now?
Maybe great Vajrayogini
standing at the seashore
her long arm offering
up to the clean sky
all of us into the purity of mind.
Maybe I would have looked
around to find something
to offer her and found flowers.**

24.II.24

=====

**But the sun was bright
so we saw everything.
Empty steps, bronze doors
of the temple, locked
as we discovered. But
at least we had climbed
the steps, made the offering
of that small exertion,
stood reverent as you can be
in front of a locked door.
But what lives inside
has a way of seeping out
so we could breathe
a little of that in.**

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**Learn by breath.
The material world is
itself a conversation.**

24.II.24

THE VISITORS

I called and they came
quickly through the foam,
big waves for such a quiet
sea. They came up the shore,
walking easy on the rocks
as on the sand. That
is how I knew who they are.

2.

Because when you call out
it is seldom clear
what name to use
to beg their presence
in your word-soaked world.

3.

**This rime it was right,
the pauses in our breaths
those sacred silences
worked into saying,
felt as natural as
the gulls floating overhead.
And they were talking too.**

4.

**My visitors (how proud
I feel to call them that)
sat down in the sand around me,**

saying nothing yet
but their eyes fixed on me
waiting with the enormous
patience of the sea.

5.

I explained that I had come here
as a pilgrim to the ancient city
behind us, pilgrim, yes,
but not in a religious sense.
Or was it? Did the stones
back there have deity
enough in them to justify
my fancy name for my blunt
wandering?

6.

Their faces eased,
muscles laxed
into the seeming
that meant they heard me,
accepted, at least for now.
How long now would last
is always such a problem.
We heard the deep bells then
from the old cathedral.
Sounds without words,
men without names.

7.

They clearly wanted to know
why I had called them

so I used the word again
and confessed I felt
a pilgrim is a sort of thief,
roaming around, seizing,
stealing the feel of a place,
molecules of its memory,
dragging them with him
ever and ever until he
too runs out of going.
Shouldn't I just stay
home and water the roses?

8.

They smiled at that,
as if to say home
is everywhere

**and everything is a rose.
Or was I reading
too much into their smiles?
how long would they wait here
for me to come clear?**

9.

**Then some wt inside me
made me understand and say
I was raised to feel guilt,
whatever I Im doing I feel
it should be something else,
so much for roses.
Even now I feel I'm just
bothering you when I should**

**just be on my way
to that mysterious elsewhere
that cancels out my here.**

10.

**As if they knew
exactly what to do
they stood up then
and came close, so close
the sand on their legs
rubbed off on my shoulders,
close, they joined hands
and did a little dance
around me, just three
or four times then**

**quickly scampered away
from me back into the sea.**

11.

**Clearly, the best answer
is to be left alone
with what you are
and what you can do.
I needed the whole
Adriatic to tell me that.**

25 February 2024

=====

**Possum slips
under the porch—
in Latin his name
means *I am able*.
He is but I'm not.
BOastful little creature!**

25.II.24

WOODSTOCK HYLONOETIC

**O Peter, Peter,
you know that real things
really think,
the ground where
you are buried
thinks with your thought
and with its own.**

25.II.24

THE STEPS

Ballooned by breath
step easy
the little up,
here it all has
beginning in it,
the priest starts Mass,
mother breakfasting her child.
A little breath
is all it takes
she said. Or did
she stay step?

2.

Anyway, be here.

Did you come home

last night or did you

never leave that whole

calendar day, sturdy

as a hermit in the home?

Too late to change that now—

morning such a breathless

pace, space—do you know

how long it took our ancestors

to breathe in sunlight?

Two things at once,

think this, do that,

history of our race.

The child reaches
for a piece of toast,
the mother remembers,

3.

Three steps and we're done,
climbing them
is the same as prayer,
offered up and answered at once.

4.

Door and steps
or steps and door,
either way the music starts.
Clerics and cynics
call it harps in heaven

but we know better.
Breath by breath
the music carries us along
until—it can take years—
we begin to understand.

5.

Liturgy used to mean
work of the people,
what all of us are
supposed to be doing
while the sun's busy shining,
earth doing its round dance.
Still lots for us to do,
ask your neurologist,

**your molecular biologist,
but mostly your teenager weeping in
the dark.**

6.

**One two three
enough for me.
Thee. We dare it
every morning,
each one of us a solo flight,
alone as Simeon on his pillar,
living off the sky.
But steps can do down too—
remember kneeling
under the hydrangea
tunneling in the soft dirt**

to house your toy animals,
fox and lion and even
camel shaded under leaves?

7.

And here you are
in my here, your there.
Sometimes midmorning
we just want to lie
down again and be carried
gently by that floating earth
just a little while—
but the horizontal
is off limits—any steps
can tell you that.

February 2024 202

**Maybe it wasn't an apple in Eden
but a nap beneath the apple tree.**

8.

**Breathe in breathe out
breathe in again—that much
should be obvious by now
even to me. The hard part
is watching what happens
in the mind while all
this breath is going on.
Because I'm lazy I just
call it music, but be wise—
don't call it anything
but study it with all your heart.**

9.

**Little steps
and little breaths.
The universe
asks nothing more.**

26 February 2024

= = = = =

**You used to be a gamelan
now you're a girl,
strange how these things work,
the part becomes the whole,
the music changes direction,
more wind, less stone,
but it sneaks into our clothes
so the skin can understand it
word by word as it wanders
around in our hearts, hear it.**

26.II.24

=====

**I'm Irish
we love to tease
but only tease
the ones we love.**

**That's how you can tell
who loves you most
and who you love best.
Tease to tell.**

26.II.24

=====

The ribald character
of wind alarms the skin
the sudden knees
hair flailing eyes.
What would we say
or do to a one
who served us so?
Yet the lindens don't complain
and they get more of it
than I do. Tease
your knees—I'd like
to do that too.

26.II.24

=====

**What's left
of all my heraldry,
two lions roaming
around a lonely tower.
Anyone inside would be
frightened to come out.
Just like language,
just like me.**

26.II.24

=====

**There is a kind of flower
creeps into the house
and flourishes unseen.**

**We call them germs
or by some Greeker name
and dread their blossoms.**

**And their only colors
are what they paint on our skin.
Rashes. Resistance. Rush
to the doctor.**

**I'm trying
to understand color,**

**I mean nature, how so
much beauty and terror
live together. In us.
And underneath the vineyard
a fossil dragon sleeps.**

27.II.24

=====

**I wonder if I'm ready,
I wonder if I'm it
as we used to say
playing hide and seek.
Why is it always up to me?
And you too, "whoever you are."**

27.II.24

=====

**What day was tomorrow?
Don't use numbers,
use your body, point
to the accurate date. Part.
Skin covers flesh,
meat hides bone. It all
points upward to the zone
where a few people sometimes
grow aware of what the skin
and all the rest of them
is telling how to be Me.
That's the day I mean.**

27.II.24

REPOETS FROM A CONFERENCE

Gentlemen, the time has come to reveal to us what your researches have disclosed.

1.

Madam, I submit herewith a map, detailed, of a mine field in Pomerania on the old border between the two Germanies. I walked across it once unharmed, unguided. But in the years since then

the location of each mine
has grown clearer and clearer
until (with the help
of an art student) I got
the whole field mapped.
Here it is, early results
from a decade's research
into the terrestrial-cognitive
union, how the human mind
learns to hear what the earth—
every yard of it, is saying.

2.

Madam, mine is a map too,
and took long years to learn.

It shows the precise locations on the human back, from neck to nates, always the back, where each person's truth is stored—you can tell lies with your face but not with your back.

On the diagram I have marked numbered points, each the site which under careful pressure from a human fingertip—no tool required or even possible—the sensorium of the person touched will undergo a change in perception, visual, auditory,

**emotional, conceptual
of a sort specific to that site.
This is a map
of everybody's back,
every point elicits
the same sensation,
differing only by virtue
of the experiences
stored in each person's mind.
Or wherever we keep them.
This is my latest contribution
to Haptic Theology,
study of how human touch
can reveal higher reality.**

3.

Mine, madam, is more modest,
I apologize. But once
in Wismar I heard
a servant girl in the hotel
singing as she changed sheets.
She was from Finland
across the water, pretty,
dark-eyed, quick, competent.
She sang in Finnish,
I suppose, I don't know
a word of that tongue
but loved what I was hearing
so I switched on my cellphone
and recorded what I heard.
For years I've listened

to her song again and again
until the sounds of it
began to sound like
words I knew, finally
even words that fit my lips
so here for you is what
she sang in me:

*I climbed a tower
stood way up there,
looked down and saw you.
I waved and called you
to come up with me,
and so you did,
and so you did.
We stayed a long time*

*just being together
but then we got thirsty,
then we got hungry,
no food up there,
up here where we
are so much together,
don't want to go down,
don't want to go down
so we walked
hand in hand
into the sky,
and so we did,
and so we did.*

Soon I'll find the right soprano
and she';; sing it our next meeting.

*

**Gentlemen, gentlemen,
you all have done well.
Curious that all your studies
have centered on location,
what it means somewhere,
on earth or body.
We know so much
about things. Perhaps
all that's left to learn
is where we are.**

28 February 2024

=====

Suppose there were no clocks,
no cuckoo to pop out
and sass you in Swiss,
what would those arrow-tipped
pointers (they call them hands
but they're more like feet
endlessly slouching around)
what will they point to now?
always something moving near,
usually something you really
don't want to see. Like me,
standing there, demanding
is it time yet?

28.II.24

=====

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**Clouds granular
a chemic rain
persuading the body
inside and outside
are the same.**

**I started out getting born
on the outwash plain yet
I'm still on my way to the sea.**

27/28.II.24

ON THE FIRST OF MARCH

The little Welsh
in me wakes and cries
St. David's Day! then
Y ddraig goch or
something like that
and falls back asleep.
But the man in me
smiles and sighs
Only three more
weeks till Spring.
But the poet wakes
to the birthday
of Lynn Behrendt
who knows how

February 2024 223

**to turn deep feelings
into words,
to turn deep feelings,
always feelings,
into visual images—
a fierce poet
working bravely
almost in secrecy
to say her world.**

28/29 February 2024

AFTER THEIR READING

for NP and PJ

**The lobsters down in Buzzards Bay
read the latest news
in the sand grain script
the waves inscribe
so briefly. They learn
of hermit crabs and cormorants
and what goes on
inside the shell
only a couple of hundred
miles away. But we
do all that here!
a baby lobster says.**

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**Yes, says mama, but we
don't have poets
to sing us what we deeply know.**

29.II.24

=====

The wind still with us
and we're only few
blocks north of noon.
The things they tell us,
these sprites (spirits)
of air and light.
It's worth getting up
sip last night's coffee
and eavesdrop on their dialogue.
I am a willing customer of time.

29.II.24

= = = = =

The man next
door to next door
is holding a dooda
merry mush hour
for two hours tonight.
Noise lurks, the panther
growl of tipsy conversation.
Where can we keep our silence?
It's too cold in the fridge...
Put an opera on the internet!
Good music says silence best.

29.II.24

=====

for DZCz

Sometimes I hear you
at the back of my mind
bent low, searching through
the flower beds, one hand
gently moving petals
to decide. There seeing stops.
Are you after color? Texture?
That sense of transparency
that makes a petal look alive,
not just a product, but a child
alone in the world. You choose
something, I can't see what,

**and keep it gently close
in the other hand. This is how
cities grow, and Odysseys
get written down, one
leaf at a time. I will keep
on watching, maybe
someday I'll get to see
exactly how your deed is done.**

29.II.24

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