

4-2024

## April 2024

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*Robert Kelly*

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=====

**Who today  
to be,  
to fill a bonnet  
with dandelions  
onward,  
and who  
presumes to  
give is to receive to  
be? Boys  
sprinkle passing girls  
who squeal happy,  
it is Europe it is now  
it is April anywhere  
close to blessing**

**as it comes**

**you get.**

**Truth-sniffing wanderers,  
counting flowers.**

**1 April 2024**

**=====**

**According to one theory  
take the medicine away  
the disease goes with it.  
As with most theories  
there is some truth in it  
but not enough, usually,  
to bite the pharmacist.  
Germs are just doing their job.**

**1.IV.24**

=====

**Pry open that soft E flat chord  
and squeeze between.  
Feel at home—this is a new  
brand of silence,  
purple armchair,  
antimacassar knitted  
by Aunt Matilda, brass  
standing ashtray, wait,  
this isn't new, it's old  
Bushwick wins again,  
cigar still smoking,  
the local flashes  
past the window. Go,  
find a chord that opens up**

**on something new.  
Or maybe you're trapped  
in this crummy old upright  
clueless as you are  
against the faded wall.**

**1 April 2024**

== ==

**In this cowboy movie  
I dress up as a buffalo  
and wander into town,  
stand by the juzgado  
and lean on the wall.**

**It is heavy work pretending  
to be me. When the fight  
tumbles out of the saloon  
I bellow with fear and  
bolt up the road, kick up  
pretty technicolor dust.**

**The good part is that not  
one word did I need to memorize  
so I could snort whatever  
came into my head.  
If I manage get good at this, maybe  
next time  
they'll let me be a horse.**

**1.IV.24**



=====

**So it's all about deception,  
this business of reading mail,  
pretending to be the one  
they think they're writing to,  
begging for dubious charities,  
telling, selling, stroking,  
coaxing. Could I possibly be  
this me they mean?**

**But I read on, message  
after message, choking  
on my own opinions,  
reacting, never action.  
deleting one by one**

**the wicked small-print  
claims of the world.  
Eighty deletions later  
I begin to think I'm just  
as weird as they were—  
how else could they find me?**

**1.IV.24**

## **IN THE PARKING LOT**

**It is as if eating greedily,  
mouthful after mouthful,  
satisfying richly,  
so much to see or be  
and we need no,  
there is no food.**

**Two hundred people  
invisible  
shown, known  
only by these empty cars.**

**And soft grey clouds over,  
April and the hint of more,**

**why is sitting here  
so like getting fed?**

**'Mother mild, O Mary sky  
look down upon  
your believing child  
saying Yes Yes Yes  
to everything.'**

**This magic place,  
mind of its own.**

***1 April 2024  
Rhinebeck***

## ASHOKAN

Walk by the reservoir,  
say my prayers  
over the calm water,  
bless it if I can.

Maybe a hundred miles  
later a kid in East Harlem  
will take a sip and  
his cough will go away.

2 April 2024

## THE SYNECDOCHE

Every now and then  
a sail goes by, not  
necessarily afloat.  
It can brain its way  
behind the eyes until  
the cheer of water seems  
to sustain it. And makes  
me happy too. Think  
of a sail and already  
you're halfway there.

2.IV.24

=====

**Irish bread  
is rain bread  
and caraway.**

**What can we do  
with what we know,  
marmot on the lawn  
or maybe fox,**

**spring brings  
so many things  
and I'm too far  
away to see.**

**Be clear about this—  
most days a question  
is its own answer.**

**Just ask your  
slice of bread.**

**2 April 2024**



=====

**Are we at the chapel yet,  
is that the dark cave  
in the hillside like an old  
ice-houses of way back then?  
Can we go in now,  
sit on a rock shelf  
and say our prayers?**

**Why do you call them then,  
the earth answered,  
when you're praying  
all the time—what do you think  
your footsteps are saying,  
meaning, trying,**

**as I count them one by one  
as you pass overhead  
stumbling towards  
where you always are?**

**2 April 2024**

=====

**Open the basket  
and let it come out.  
There's something alive  
in there, kitten or puppy,  
rabbit or rat, I hear  
breath, crawling around.  
All the evidence of meaning  
abounds. And you hold  
the basket easily, no great weight, no  
great fear.  
So open up, let us hear what  
the world wants to tell us**

**2.IV.24**

=====

**A better philosophy  
will lubricate every move.**

**Think better to walk fast.**

**I may be quoting Heron  
of Alexandria who invented  
the first automobile,  
steam-powered, two  
thousand years ago,  
reflect that steam  
is a special kind of breath.**

**2.IV.24**

=====

**Tempt me by mirror  
to change what I see,  
the crows fly up  
above the lindens,  
I taste the rain.**

**2.**

**So many animals  
in a single man.  
The fleece comes off  
when I take off the coat  
but any one of us  
is still a zoo. No wonder**

**we take children  
to the Bronx or Prospect Park  
so they can see  
one by one who they  
themselves really are.**

**3.  
Plus something else, of course,  
the human soul,  
that gleaming six-pronged  
star in our genome,  
the girl by the lotus pond  
humming softly.**

**4.**

**Images wait  
for a wall in us  
to hang on and  
illuminate our  
imagination. Build  
them a wall  
out of bricks of silence.**

**5.**

**Some glasses  
are best when empty.  
The image fades,  
I see nothing in the glass  
except another window.**

**Sometimes a bird goes by.  
Even with my appetite  
I think that's enough.**

**2 April 2024**



## **BEDTIME IN EDEN**

**Tip the angel  
who made your bed  
and filled the ewer.  
Mute the TV but stay  
with the pictures, play  
with them as if they  
too were people.  
Every midnight is the same,  
every morning casts you  
out into the wander world.  
How many words do you need  
on the way to your next sleep?**

**2 April 2024**

=====

**The images dissolve.  
paint drips off the canvas,  
sketchy smudges left  
of what I've seen.  
Seen and could not say.**

**2.**

**So a different music  
is required, something  
on the other side of color,**

**3.**

**But not to hear,  
just to know,  
like the tide  
pushing up between  
cliffs of the estuary,  
you can almost see.**

**4.**

**They were still children,  
it was an old green Chevy  
stuck in the mud  
on that dirt road  
down to Yucatan  
they called it**

**because the rocks they found  
and lost again  
and they had to walk home.**

**5.  
Know it unseen,  
taste it untouched.  
It's like trying to  
talk with the rain.**

**3 April 2024**

=====

**The sideways leap  
of satisfaction  
when you hurry  
to the other to be sure  
you did it right.  
Whatever it is.  
All roads lead up.  
You look at the other,  
the other's eyes evade.  
Eden's gates clang shut again.**

**3.IV.24**

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**Put the star in your pocket.  
You heard me, do it,  
it won't hurt much,  
the burn will stop soon  
and only the shine  
will be left, a glow  
on your clothes  
and everyone will know  
and listen to all you say  
if you just listen to me now.**

**3 April 2024**

=====

**Silence is scary  
only when the noises come,  
Columbus in the brain  
sails forth but never  
comes to shore,  
the ocean of anxiety  
is endless**

**2.**

**I thought I heard something falling,  
something always falls I thought I  
heard someone come to touch it,  
leave it where it fell, pick it up or just**

**watch to see what the world looks  
like  
when yet one thing has fallen.  
I hope so, I hope so, I hope so.**

**3.**

**places to go  
some places to stay  
I wonder where the Moon  
waits behind the wind  
behind the woods,  
how can I know what I know.**

**4 April 2024**



## CALL IT WEATHER

Call it weather.  
Flake by flower  
it will come and go.  
And who are you?

2.  
April snow  
after mild March.  
Just a dusting  
they say, barn roof,  
car hood, shadow  
of the fence so  
gone by noon.

**3.**

**Don't hide what happened.**

**Broken sleep with**

**nighttime noises,**

**house creak, footsteps**

**where no one walks.**

**If thinking is any help,**

**think: an old house**

**says its prayers all night.**

**4.**

**Maybe some nights**

**are neurotic themselves,**

**I mean no impiety,**

**Nox has many sisters.**

5.

Let's talk about it later,  
in the early afternoon,  
that sober workaholic time  
cheer of brunch,  
fizz of cola.

6.

Yes, I admit it,  
I'm feeling tender  
about the snow,  
the little icing  
on the here-and-there,  
it may be half a year  
before I see you again.

**7.**

**Mind is comfort  
here, mind  
has a visa  
lets it move  
through time  
faster even than the wind  
whisking the umbrella  
on the patio,  
patio delicate with ice.**

**8.**

**All we can do,  
should do,  
is be with it,  
whatever it is.**

**Call it weather,  
call it message,  
send out your augurs  
to interpret it.  
Mild mild mild.  
No one we know  
buried in this ground.**

**9.  
So leave history out of it,  
just nibble on  
what seems to be now,  
swallow if you can.  
I so often choke on information.**

**10.**

**Call it weather  
and walk with it  
as briskly as you can,  
hearing hard  
to every word,  
make up your adjectives  
as you trot along,  
decide what the day  
is saying and sing it  
onward, use your words,  
your new-found voice.**

**11.**

**Louder you sing  
truer it gets,**

**all the ifs fall away,  
cuddle the canary,  
walk the cat?  
You'll get it right  
before night comes back.**

**4 April 2024**

== == == ==

**Plant a baseball  
water and wait.  
In a winter or two  
up will spring  
an orange tree  
right through the snow.**

**Full of ripe oranges,  
not so good for eating.  
Just keep the pretty  
blossoms, the colors  
flashing in mind.**



**Some images are  
enough in themselves.**

**You can do the same  
with cricket balls  
but the tree turns lemon.**

**4.IV.24**

=====

**When I smell the soap  
on my hands I remember  
the dirt or stench  
it washed away. The soap  
a little like confession—  
sin absolved but guilt lingers.  
Such an intricate world  
religion makes for us.**

**4.IV.24**

== =

***Gehorsam.* Obedient.  
Doing what one is told.  
To hear is to obey  
we say, smiling  
usually, not always  
in the heart but  
hear. Hear and habit,  
hear and answer.**

**2.  
It's all about answering.  
It's all about you  
in other words  
not other words,**

**your words,  
what you say  
is the only answer  
whether you smile  
or sing or fiddle  
with your necktie  
or lounge there  
on the Jersey shore  
swallowing the sun.**

**3.**

**I have spoken before  
about the sensuous pleasu.re  
of obeying the law,  
just as real as the adolescent  
pleasure in breaking it.**

**People of all kinds  
tell you what to do.  
Hearing them means  
it's all now up to you.**

**4.**

**Pardon the rhyme,  
nowadays a crime.  
And tightly so—  
the jangle of handcuffs  
never far away.  
But the problem here is  
you everything rhymes with you.**

**5.**

**So we can lie back now,  
not worrying, the fine print  
on our big map too  
small to read, lie back,  
no beach needed,  
welcome as the waves  
might be, lie back,  
never mind obeying,  
don't bother hearing.  
Just listen. Sometimes  
listening is answering enough.  
Your breath does all the rest.**

**5 April 204**

=====

**On the beach at Jones's—  
what a plain name for  
our handiest ocean,  
our tropical paradise  
and highway away  
and it does have a touch  
of Wales, hence whales,  
and Lord knows why  
Moses named it, names  
come fast and loose  
here in Vespucciland,  
Great Turtle I mean,  
speaking of names,  
the land they gave me**

when I was born, lucky  
in Brooklyn, nigh  
to Sheepshead Bay  
a sleeker sober place  
than Coney, which naturally  
is not an island, just like me  
hard as I try to be one.

5.IV.24



=====

**Ways of water  
ways of wheel**

**stubborn I stand  
waiting for someone  
to stare through a window  
onto by my room  
looking and speaking  
to tell me who I am**

**today or any day,  
have I ever been here  
before? why is everything so  
strange? even the settle**

I sit on every day,  
this hand I write with,  
the words graven down  
are all so strange

but you don't have strange  
in you out there  
I can't see you  
so I know you're real,  
I can't hear you  
so I know you're there,  
I can't feel you but I know  
whatever I know  
because you tell me.

5/6.IV.24

= = == = = =

I listed all the cities  
where I had gotten lost  
and your name came up  
among them again and again.  
I listed all the rivers I failed  
to cross and there you were sparkling  
quick rippling  
and was that a sturgeon  
that leapt up far away  
almost to the other shore?

5/6.IV.24

**= = = = =**

**A whale at Coney Island  
sprayed me from its spout.  
I have a lot to be happy about.**

**Rhyme can tell you more  
then slam the door.**

**6 April 2024**

== == == ==

**It has a hole in the middle  
so it's meant to leave you free  
to add some words of your own  
to the staid announcement.**

**In this ideal world  
there's always room for more.  
And I haven't even said  
what 'it' is that is so open—  
that too is left to you.**

**6 April 2024**

=====

**A controversial songbook from the ancient Hesperides recently uncovered and read by archeologists is full of conpound nouns never seen before. Now the world of real things has a lot to catch up with— not to mention the music.**

**6.IV.24**

## VAV CONSECUTIVUM

Some days I think  
and  
is the sweetest word of all.

6.IV.24

== ==

**Once in Wyoming  
a Mexican smiled,  
a pronghorn leapt the road.  
Such things make me me.  
But I'll never catch up  
with where I've been.**

**6.IV.24**



=====

**It could be almost  
any bird it passed  
so fast and yet it had  
to be just one.**

**It left me  
with a lexicon of guesses  
ranged by size and season.  
So I'll guess robin  
reasonable this weather.**

**If I'm wrong, there'll be one  
real bird and one imagined one.  
And just to, so long ago**

**on Ararat Noah one  
by one let the animals out.**

**6 April 2024**

=====

**She turns the pages,  
listens to the phone,  
on hold, but the birds  
outside are on patrol,  
the magazine is one  
week old but still,  
pictures linger longer,  
consider Altamira,  
what year is this,  
morning on earth.**

**7 April 2024**

= = = = =

**Mother's birthday  
golden with forsythia  
this year more than ever,  
swan on a little river.  
Still so much she gives me.**

**7 April 2024**

=====

***M.R.K. 1902-1990***

**What can I say?  
Mahler was still busy  
making what we hear,  
Doyle was still unventing Sherlock  
Holmes  
when she came into the world  
and here I am.**

**7.IV.24**

**= = = = =**

**Yellow roses  
on the table  
but who is listening?  
Everything has to have  
an alternative.  
So what is mine?  
And what is theirs?**

**7.IV.24**

=====

**Who shines the sun?  
Who means the moon?**

**Questions of identity  
lead us into trouble,  
a sea of doubts and certainties  
we float on still, tossed  
by storm, soothed by calm,  
religion by religion,  
subject by subject by  
infinite verb. We verb!**

**7.IV.24**

=====

**All function. No identity  
but what it does.**

**I met him walking  
up the hill, he showed  
me his hands, callused  
from years of hard work.**

**I tried to show him  
the calluses in my brain  
but he just laughed  
at all my explanation  
of hard thinking  
lifting heavy language.**

**But still he let me  
go on walking with him**



**as if we were friends.**

**He had trained as a carpenter  
and still knew the way.**

**7.IV.24**

=====

**There I was on my tricycle  
in an ordinary alley way  
roving up and down  
in pussy-willow April  
near the garage, Pontiac.  
Years later moved on  
to four wheels, Chevy,  
upstate, green. Never  
managed two. Wheels  
are the fundamental mystery.  
Maybe someday master one.**

**7.IV.24**

=====

**Six little pieces  
broken off a flute,  
the squeal of music  
when nothing happens.**

**Tuba. Harp. Bassoon.  
Now you're talking,  
two sonatas played at once,  
sweet sounds thick  
with contradiction,**

**listen if you dare,  
we are bold, we thrive  
on all contradictions,**

**music most of all,  
battling as it does  
the rhythm of our blood,  
breath, neurology  
so while we shiver with delight  
mice shudder in the wainscot.**

**7.IV.24**

=====

***Wassernacht und Wasserkraft***

**water power water might,  
I dream a river and  
I drink from it as swift  
it carries me along.**

**The thought of water  
takes you everywhere  
but you do need some  
earth to stand on  
when you get there.**

**I am an air sign, I watch  
with amazement**

**from far above,  
so many gallons it takes  
to get through a week  
or imagine a mountain  
or fall in or out of love.**

**7.IV.24**

=====

**Some days it feels  
as if I haven't quite been born,  
still waiting for the last  
coin to slip into the slot  
so the candy machine  
drops the Mars bar out.  
Something like that.  
Unwrap and find out  
who I am. Or am this time.  
Since I'm standing here  
I must have come  
from somewhere,  
watching the subway go by.**

**7.IV.24**

**= = = =**

**Make my own news  
before they sell me theirs.  
Motto for morning,  
shout my scripture  
onto the page,  
say it came  
and it did come  
from that heaven  
of the human sleep.  
We wake drowsy  
with revelation,  
so speak, speak.  
Her yellow roses  
on the breakfast table,**



**shadow of Gilgamesh  
leaves a parcel at the door.  
Let it rest a while unopened  
while I study to discover  
what the day holds.**

**8 April 2024**

=====

**Impoverished by design  
the curriculum bores  
the students, sends them  
anywhere else to sate  
their decent lusts.**

**It talks about men  
almost always,  
men who talked,  
men who invented  
things we no longer use,  
men who developed  
new ways to kill.**

**But at last at least  
one week a year in spring  
the students are set free  
to sit down on the stones  
of Yucatan and really learn.**

**8.IV.24**

=====

**The passion according to Mark  
is missing from the gospels.  
The story ends in midair,  
a young man running away  
if I remember correctly.  
Not a happy ending because  
there is no ending.  
Something is still going on.**

**2.**

**Why do I try to turn  
everything into a pulpit?  
I know nothing**

**but what I hear  
myself saying.**

**Dear friends, mynso dear  
friends, go on drowsing  
in the pews while  
I try to say what comes next.**

**3.**

**But I don't know that yet.  
It is the day of the eclipse.  
The child hides his mother  
so we can see for a moment  
how glorious generous she is.  
Just a second's glance  
tells us all we need to know,**

**and we also get to see all round  
what things look like  
by themselves, without her.**

**4.**

**Is that more sermon?**

**I met an actress once,**

**I met a priest, I met**

**a president-to-be,**

**I met a man mowing the lawn.**

**He turned off the mower**

**so we could talk.**

**She made eye contact**

**in a crowded room.**

**The priest told me I was forgiven.**

5.

Afternoon already,  
language rippling,  
mind asleep.

6.

Doesn't that sound  
like a poem from the late T'ang?  
It would sound better  
surely in Chinese  
but at least it tells the truth.  
I mean the news.

**6.**

**Is here a difference,  
in other words  
between what happens  
and what we say about it?  
Oe is the gap too great  
to step gracefully across  
and call it dance?**

**7.**

**This is not Cappadocia  
in the second century,  
trucks roll outside,  
a car radio blasphemes  
among the bird song  
in April sunshine. This**



**is not even Rome,  
all our catacombs  
are in the brain,  
skeletons of lost ideas.**

**8.**

**Tribute paid to time,  
I keep the receipt in my mirror.  
But time sends news  
now and then, things  
I can't find in the media,  
things have shapes and shadows,  
things have sounds.  
Everything takes time—  
no wonder it costs so much.**

**9.**

**Have I gotten to the window yet?  
The hallways are so long,  
only a sense of light  
far away. To live  
in a house is to live  
in an eclipse. Our cave  
dwelling mothers taught us that:  
shut yourselves darkness  
and imagine light, let  
there be one source of it  
find it by following your breath.**

**10.**

**And so it comes t rest.  
What does?**

**That kite you flew  
on Crescent Street,  
darts, dartboard at Narrowsburg,  
wombat in Catskill,  
avocado tree in Altadena,  
everything right here  
where the lesson endeth.**

**8 April 2024**

=====

**Glory hurts the gaudy eye  
I wonder what that means  
but someone said it,  
is it about what happens  
to the light between  
source and destination?  
And where is the light  
headed, and to whom?  
Every question is a miracle  
or summons one.  
So ask, little brother, ask.**

**8.IV.24**

## DANGER ROSES

I call them yellow  
she calls them orange,  
ha, I spun my spectrum  
faster than she.

But I would rather  
be with her than right.

8.IV.24

====

**And then dark sunshine came.  
Cries of light. Poets do not usually  
sing. Maybe in church or shul, but  
these days not many poets go to  
services that use words other than  
their own. Poetry readings  
sometimes have a churchy feel, but  
let's hope not.  
Still, poets call themselves singers,  
with some justice, since their stuff is  
built of silence and sound, interval  
and continuity, and the thirty-odd  
phonemes of most human languages  
approximate the notes in the octaves**

**of a good soprano's tessitura. Maybe even a bass. Maybe even me. It's all in the word, song asleep. Wake it by hearing.**

**9 April 2024**

== ==

**1.**

**Sister light  
around the edges  
of all my personal dark.  
I wait in town  
across the corner  
from the church.**

**2.**

**Buildings are reverent  
in themselves,  
even those sky-scratchers  
in the Persian Gulf,**



*stone prays*

the Greeks know that  
and we wound up bring Greeks.

3.

Emergencies mean  
whatever comes  
out of the not-yet  
into the now.

Now, now, now  
is a lit candle  
in the darkest church.

4.

Big game  
they call it,

**take life,  
life after life  
like a carousel  
teach the child the wheel  
and they'll know  
everything else implicitly.**

**5.  
Calm down,  
childhood is almost over,  
\_\_\_\_\_ not for the mature,  
means I'm still learning—  
I know so much less  
than you do, as you of me,  
O dear God learn us to share.**

**6.**

**Can it still walk back to itself  
this crinkled book  
we borrow by being?  
I studied the sunlight  
on the patio's red tiles.  
It stared right back at me.**

**9 April 2024  
Rhinebeck**

=====

**Hold back the chariots,  
flags in the firmament.  
We are victory enough.**

**2.**

**In the Black Forest  
upwells the Danube.  
Drink from me,  
glad at the birth of time.  
I am the ledger  
your debts get erased from.**

**3.**

**From Black Forest  
to Black Sea.**

**That also is me.**

**I studied geography  
when I was too young  
to know it wasn't  
all about me.**

**9 April 2024  
Rhinebeck**

=====

**In the peat bog of old Ireland  
I found a chandelier.  
Old iron work discarded  
maybe from the 1920s  
built for electric bulbs  
no more wax I drag it  
up and out and lift it  
onto a tree branch  
count the sockets.**

**There were twelve so  
I thought of the apostles**

**in this Christian country  
I thought of the pagan months  
in years we still walk through then  
turned my back and walked away, so  
much I left behind me, peat from the  
bog burning  
gently in the dining room  
of the small hotel, the chandelier  
hanging high my mind now,  
me counting the sockets  
over and over hoping to find  
a new answer to a question  
I haven't even been asked yet.**

**9/10.IV.24**





## THE CHORALE

Blended with the trees  
the shouts  
inaugurate springtime.  
People call them birds  
but I know better,  
they are notes on a scale  
we can hear only  
with our eyes after  
the doom of sound is rung.

2.

That sounds mere confusion.  
Mauve people are right,  
they sometimes are.

**Birds twittering  
*parmi les feuilles.***

**Where did that  
come from,  
what does it mean?**

**3.**

**So much comes to mind.  
No wonder spring.**

**4.**

**Yes, I've seen the prairie  
(puszta, steppe, plain)  
and once you've seen it,  
it stays in you,  
the way things do,**

**stretching out immensely  
from closed eyes.**

**What we see inhabits us.**

**5.**

**Baffled by the trees  
hard to tell  
the birds from the leaves.  
And both make music  
in the morning breeze.**

**6.**

**There, that makes sense,  
seems normal, ordinary,  
hence reeks of truth.**

**7.**

**Full recovery,  
charged battery,  
things are people too.  
Now you've heard it  
but who said it?  
Erase these doubts,  
donuts and hot chocolate  
across the river  
just for my darling  
birds are singing.  
Birds are birds.  
For instance finches.**

**10 April 2024**

**=====**

**I was Irish  
as a meadow,  
you were Ashkenazi  
as a busy college town.  
We need each other,  
no other nationality will do.**

**10.IV.24**

**== ==**

**Lightbulb on the ceiling  
how much you've seen.  
Store it all up, send it down  
to us as light, event  
by quiet event until  
we get some sense of who  
we are who live down here  
under your wakeful eye.**

**10.IV.24**

= = = = =

**There's a car next door  
that plays the drums  
when it comes and  
when it goes.**

**I assume the driver  
chooses it, but him  
(more likely than her)  
I've never seen the car.**

**Come to that, never even  
seen the car. We live  
in a disaster of assumptions.**

**10.IV.24**

## BESTIARY

Carrier-pigeon  
fly me, message  
me away, be my  
sacred dove  
pue white as blank paper  
and let me word.

2.

Tiger, striped  
with lines of text,  
words can run  
sideways too  
and still bite.



**3.**

**Ocelot you gentler fierce  
drink rain in rainforest  
where it urns to ink.  
Scurry along in good prose.**

**4.**

**Anaconda scary too  
as words can be  
from any you to any  
me, I shiver with what  
may uncoil next  
like a question mark  
to doubt my word.**

5.

I went to the zoo  
to find who I am  
and the first person  
was a glistening black seal  
who barked at me in Gaelic  
and swam around  
and around. And around.  
Never come to a point.  
There is no point.  
But lots of other seals.

6.

Pachyderm, my father said,  
this modest elephant  
from India, dusty

like most translations,  
grey. Years later  
in Chicago a big black one  
charged me, shook  
the railings, those long  
lines between us and the real.

7.

It was the kingfisher  
who taught me what to do.  
I was a naked child  
sitting on a rock midstream  
and he from nowhere  
but very high flashed  
straight down and in  
the brook and out again,

**fish in beak. I got the point.  
Be naked. Wait.  
Dive down fast and  
deep as you can,  
snatch the meaning  
and soar up, sunlight  
gleaming in your bright blue.**

**10 April 2024**

**=====**

**Tell the clock  
what time it is  
and ask a woman  
if you don't know.**

**Relationship is all,  
all that matters here,  
and uses numbers  
all its own to count.  
So pray to the weather  
you get your question right.  
We're all in this together,  
dark trying to explain the light.**

***11 April 2024***

=====

**To hear this message  
in Spanish, go back  
a century and climb  
a modest Catskill slope,  
knock on a cabin door  
and listen hard to  
what Lorca says  
when he comes out.  
If he likes your looks  
you'll hear more poem  
than anybody else could tell.**

**11.IV.24**

**=====**

**Broadly. Or strongly.  
Or some other adverb  
that means you care.  
Or at least are there  
ready to do whatever  
you see yourself doing  
spectacularly.**

**11.IV.24**

**=====**

**Method's meter  
longer than hope's  
yard. Find a branch  
fallen in the weather  
just the right length.  
Lean on it and face  
the sunrise. See,  
everything is possible.  
Ask your hands what to do.**

**11.IV.24**



=====

**See who's there  
before the willow tree,  
looks like parents,  
could they be mine?  
So many trees, so much  
information. I rose  
at a seemly hour, trying  
yet again to be me.**

**2.  
The foliage is tricky  
especially in sunlight,  
which is a branch  
and which is shadow,**

**the perplexity of waking  
attend me. Maybe  
I should talk to the cat.**

**3.**

**Of course there is no cat,  
I'm too proud for that.  
Not even a budgie bird.  
I totter on my own meek feet  
waving my arms, quoting Greek.**

**4.**

**You see, adolescence  
is a life-long occupation,  
an incurable condition.**

**To be a troubadour means  
writing love poems to  
someone who doesn't love you.**

**5.**

**Flowers, for instance.**

**When my mother planted roses  
six yards of blossoming scarlet  
soon lined the back yard.**

**years later I planted a rose bush,  
a few flowers now and then  
and they turned out to be  
not roses but Japanese quinces.**

**6.**

**This tee-shirt I've been  
writing mottoes on  
can be worn by anyone  
not just me. I'm making  
your confession too—  
but don't ask who.**

**7.**

**Living by the river  
is just a reminder  
we all live in a river,  
the one called time  
though other names are used.**

**Doctors call it tinnitus,  
I call it fine golden sand  
slipping through the hourglass.**

**8.**

**One more image  
disguised as an explanation.  
Sun behind cloud  
child begins to cry.  
It starts to rain  
the child smiles.  
The quince bush flowers.  
yesterday in the parking lot  
a woman was talking  
to her three-year-old in French.**

***12 April 2024***

**= = = = =**

**Trump's plan  
in a nutshell—  
send the Statue  
of Liberty back to France—  
that woman gives some  
people the wrong idea.**

**12.IV.24**

**== ==**

**Sometimes  
you have to say it  
even if you  
don't believe it.  
Language doesn't always  
care which side you're on.**

**12.IV.24**

**=====**

**Right time  
wrong day,  
numbers lead me  
into a morass  
of half-truths.  
At least I have  
a cabin there  
to shelter in,  
built years ago  
I think by me.**

**13 April 2024**



=====

Forest nearby  
abbey enough.  
Who's the abbot?  
Up to you. Polecat.  
Cicada chorale.  
Look around a while  
and choose, choose.  
choose. Just like  
anywhere else.  
And ignore all good advice.  
Pray, citizen, pray.

13.IV.24

**=====**

**I've lost the knack  
of this. What does  
a knack look like?**

**Try the toolkit, the Bible,  
the racing form, one  
of those horses will  
have the right name.**

**Or call your uncle,  
he was good at improvising,  
even remembering him  
might help.**

**And what**

**as I trying to repair?  
How did it get broken?  
I fear I may have lost  
more than the knack.**

**13.IV.24**

=

====

**We don't have pigeons,  
we have doves.**

**We don't have subways  
we have joggers  
panting along at dusk.**

**O where has my  
childhood gone?**

**13.IV.24**

**= = = = =**

**Anybody after all,  
a codger or a drifter,  
imam, physiatrist,  
just ask. They know,  
they always know.  
Truth is in the other.**

**13.IV.24**

====

**So I said to the magnolia,  
thanks for being early  
this year. And she said  
forsythia showed me the way,  
sailed spring is early,  
don't keep her waiting.  
Now excuse me, please,  
I've got to lecture  
those lazy walnut trees.**

**13.IV.24**

== == == ==

**Pale day  
waiting for its opera.  
Singers all assembled  
but the music  
hasn't been written yet.  
So they wander around  
disguised as crows and  
bluejays and squirrels  
and I wonder what time is for.**

**13.IV.24**

== ==

**Look for the bright penny  
gleaming in the baking tin  
set outside to water birds.  
Money was so ornamental  
when it still was things  
and not just numbers.  
I wonder if that happens  
to us too, and I become  
nothing but a name  
you may or may not remember.**

**13.IV.24**



**= = = = =**

**Packet of pipe cleaners  
but no pipe. Matches  
but no cigarettes.  
I diagnose a lazy man  
has given up tobacco—  
but he won't give  
anything else away.**

**13.IV.24**

== ==

**Call it New Orleans,  
some city not too cold  
and a river of its own  
but too much weather.**

**Call it language, it happens  
all the time but not  
always when you need it.**

**Call it a road but it goes nowhere.  
Now change the labels,  
pray to the sun behind  
all those scofflaw clouds.**

**13.IV.24**

**== ==**

**Streak of sunlight  
through the clouds?  
No, a yellow sipping straw  
left on the table. Ah,  
resemblance is a cheery,  
beery party, easy,  
but don't try to take it home.**

**13.IV.24**

=====

On the side of salt  
The liminal lilacs  
are around the corner  
future cosmos  
in which you and I  
can walk gently enough  
down to the river  
or not to it, not all the way  
but just to that cliff  
between the old house  
and the water,  
the train goes by  
between us and the flow  
but not so often—

**we can stand there an hour  
pretending to be ordinary  
travelers by the river,  
no train, no house, just being above  
the river, watching it go.**

**14 April 2024**

**= = = = =**

**Cold air slept me  
and it broke  
a pattern I was  
trying to be,**

**all night and light  
made scant difference,  
waking just one more  
part of the dream.**

**14 April 2024**

**== ==**

**Streak of sunlight  
through the clouds?  
No, a yellow sipping straw  
left on the table. Ah,  
resemblance is a cheery,  
beery thing, easy,  
but don't try to take it home.**

**13.IV.24**

=====

**Organize the garden  
of the hindbrain,  
hope the images,  
if images arise,  
tell a story just a little  
different from all  
the things I think.**

**I'm telling my gullible self  
to walk in the woods  
with my eyes closed.  
Stumbling is inevitable  
and trees gave tricky roots.  
And we know the inside**



**is scarier than outside.  
Still, I may be lucky—  
I may learn the other  
side of what I think I know.**

**14 April 2024**

=====

*for Austin in Tblisi*

The golden fleece  
was Medea's pubic hair.  
Everybody knows that,  
only the Greeks forgot.  
So many things they got  
wrong in their beautiful way.  
Their mistakes make  
the rosary of what we believe.

Ungreek thyself,  
wash the old tales clean!  
Think of a tattpo—

**the skin that tells a story  
is the real story,  
the Black Sea is white with foam.  
And you know who  
comes to us out of the foam.**

**14 April 2024**

**= = = = =**

**Megaliths and paragraphs  
stand between us and  
the birth of time.**

**I count my fingers  
to see how old I am.  
What do you use?**

**Just today the sandstone  
strata by the river said  
it's Sunday. Tomorrow  
taxes are due. The sun  
came out of the clouds  
to prove it.**

**My face  
blurs in the mirror  
but it is a face, I'm here,  
the chronological express  
hurtles us all along.**

**14.IV.24**

**= = = =**

**Raccoon on the lawn  
or did she say dragon  
in French? I'll always  
go for the least likely.  
I hear him roaring now  
among the dew-soaked ferns.**

**14.IV.24**

**=====**

**But it said it was  
so it is. Doubt  
is one more desperate  
lie. Smoke comes out  
only when it's running.  
Everything is an engine.  
every child knows that,  
clutching last year's Easter bunny.**

**15 April 2024**

=====

**Sun so, day so.  
What we see  
sounds so often  
better in Chinese.**

**15.IV.24**



**=====**

**Curious effect: orange  
roses vased on the table  
collect all the dark  
into themselves on this  
very bright morning.**

**Shield our eyes by  
staring at flowers?  
Back to bed.  
Sleep the dark.**

**15.IV.24**

**=====**

**Seven chairs around the table,  
the sacraments are coming  
for lunch. You'll pay most  
attention to Holy Orders,  
I'll focus on Matrimony.  
We'll eat later, nourished  
by their leftovers.**

**15.IV.24**

== ==

**I used to be a fair typist  
but nowadays my fuzzy  
eyesight make my fingers  
write lies I never Saudi,  
I mean I never said.**

**15/IV.24**

**== ==**

**My grandfather was a detective,  
whence my taste for confessions.  
Too busy to write crime novels  
I can at least explain how  
one by one I put  
the clean glasses  
and dishes away,  
carefully, hoping  
to spare you the chore.  
And haven't broken one yet.  
At least in recent months.**

**15.IV.24**

====

**Why did a city  
with no affluent stream  
perch on a river  
with no natural harbor  
when all the other  
towns on the river  
typically had both?  
Like the one right across  
on the opposite shore.**

**sheep or cattle, calcite  
mines but why, factories  
but making what? Indian  
trading post five miles inland?**

**I think the crows led them,  
something came or yet  
will come that will make  
all their absences necessities.**

**15.IV.24**

= == = =

Sandstone late in yester-sun  
so deerskin wet and warm,  
stop the car, make love to it,  
and see what pregnancies  
in us from that stone kiss.

All this by cool river  
where inept yachtsmen  
are foxed by launch angle,  
their boat askew on the ramp.

And it's all for us,  
delight of eyes and mind  
and that's what public

**means, it's all for anybody,  
even us. Tell me when  
we've seen enough.**

**15 April 2024**



**= = = = =**

**Almost there.**

**Where?**

**Here.**

**Oh.**

**I have had this  
conversation so  
many times before.**

**15.IV.24**

## **CLOUDWALKING**

**Step cautious  
from shadow to shadow,  
pause if you run out of shade,  
wait till the sun  
spills some more.  
This is your path  
where you're never alone.**

**15 April 2024**

== == == == ==

**Go nowhere  
it is not ready**

**\***

**Go nowhere  
here you are,  
but there who knows?**

**\***

**Sparse evidence  
the curtain moved  
a flock of birds flew up**

**\***

**They know  
they know**

**\***

**Sometimes meaning  
is the opposite of being**

**\***

**Be a hero  
or actually hear**

**\***

**Gists from night's attic  
seem sense in light.**

**16 April 2024**

====

**When you grow up  
like most New Yorkers  
on the subway  
then every kind of going  
or even coming  
feels like that:  
all alone in the dark  
under earth, in a chariot  
crowded with people and light.**

**16.IV.24**

**=====**

**Some nights I skip  
watching the news  
for fear it watches back.**

**We're all in this together,  
you know, and I have  
already happened to me.**

**16.IV.24**

## ANGELS

A painter puts wings  
on their shoulders  
but I'm not sure  
angels have wings,  
whether wings are  
metaphor or anatomy,  
but I do know angels  
can be elsewhere then  
instantly here.

The bird  
analogy is honorable,  
birds are honorable,  
honest and quick.

**And powerful. like  
that eagle you saw Sunday  
fierce as Garuda, perched  
calmly by its nest  
outside the gas station  
in Lake Katrine.**

**Yes,  
the music says angels  
are everywhere,  
they whisper under the wind,  
blink us messages in sunlight.**

**2.**

**I think I remember  
standing one night in Harlem**



standing at the railing  
looking down at the canal.  
In the murky water I saw  
what I took to be my own  
reflection or my shadow,  
who can tell, it was very late  
and I was morbid, but  
when I moved my arms  
the shape did not move its.  
I whirled around to see  
who was standing behind or beside  
me but nobody there.  
So then I knew. I think  
I remember that.

3.

*Say less than you know  
and the pain sometimes goes away.*

**Write that on the blackboard  
before the teacher  
comes into the room.**

**In their heart they'll thank you,  
never mind what they say.**

4.

**But now I've said that  
I begin to think  
the angels' so-called wings  
might well be our words,  
they flutter so easily,  
often graceful, from our lips,**

**tickled into telling  
by the angels' skill.**

**5.**

**So maybe that's why painters  
show angels as handsome  
men and women with wings,  
angels are us. Plus not us  
at all. Listen and leap up.**

**16 April 2024**

**= = = = =**

**Is it almost  
or ready?  
Can I hear it  
if I sing?**

**Too many questions  
spoil the sunshine.**

**Flowers on the table—  
one morning you wake  
and find the first petal  
has fallen. There is rests  
pale on polished pine  
and 5he time fpr thinking**

**has begun. You wait  
for another to fall  
But in this long sabbatical  
of thought there are some  
things you don't want to think.  
Hold to the tables wood—  
the grain is scripture enough.**

**16.IV.24**

== =

**Prophets  
on the Irrawady  
a name in my head  
a knife my cousin  
brought home from  
war on the table.  
Don't listen.  
Try not to touch.**

**17 April 2024**

== ==

**But where did the real  
come from,  
why did it stay?  
No way to answer,  
no grounds for doubt.**

**17.IV.24**

**=====**

**In the dream academy  
I played the role of myself  
but burdened with obligation  
to create a new woman  
every summer by sheer  
literary contrivance.**

**She must seem convincing  
as they read the book  
of poems where she lives,  
she had to be blond  
But this year they took  
the requirement away.**



**No more invention needed,  
I was free! Now just  
the normal work of  
teaching and telling.  
I bet she's relieved too,  
whoever she is, hiding  
somewhere out of my mind.**

**17 April 2024**

**== ==**

**In this dark doorway  
a deed is done.  
A woman stands,  
shivering, praying  
to the God who said  
*I am the door*. Let me  
in, she cries, let me in!  
And the whole world  
springs wide open.**

**17.IV.24**

**=====**

**Fiduciary folk  
fondle our funds,  
we whimper  
in the wilderness.**

**17.IV.24**

**== ==**

**Nobody's neighbor  
sidles through the trees.  
If they knew what I was thinking  
they'd shoot, or maybe not,  
maybe they feel lonely tpp  
in their bright bungalows,  
maybe I'm not the only  
fool afoot. But still I hide,  
hide in leaves, hide in shade,  
it is my pretty song to sing.**

**17.IV.24**

**=====**

**The Archbishop of Everywhere  
smiles in all the papers,  
blesses on video, never  
shares his doubt,  
that poisoned cup.  
Kind to keep doubt dark—  
the light is faint enough already.**

**17.IV.24**

**=====**

**Cock crow, dog bark,  
all try to tell us something.  
We're still talking, writing,  
singing, trying  
to find out what.**

**17.IV.24**

**=====**

**Bluesome? can we?  
Skylike, on bright day?  
Conundrum breakfast,  
crumbs in the open book.  
Read them and sleep.**

**17.IV.24**

=====

**No more port  
no more compass.  
This vessel is precisely  
where it is. End  
of story, end of journey.  
Now the story can begin.**

**2.  
The mapmaker  
puts his tools away,  
the navigator  
takes up yoga,  
spiritual, not just muscle.**



**The sails are taken down—  
soon enough they'll be of use  
cut up into tarpaulins  
and canopies for sunny afternoons.**

**3.**

**The main problem  
seems to be the sea  
all round them, how  
can they ignore it,  
its constant arrivals,  
its unending invitation  
to be somewhere else.  
And so they built  
an altar to the Ocean**

**and the old chaplain  
showed them how to pray.**

**4.**

**Food seemed a problem at first  
but birds and fish and such  
kept turning up,  
and floating weeds  
and cocktails of pure kril.**

**5.**

**The measure,  
I mean the pleasure  
of such stories  
comes when the reader**

**closes the book and thinks  
That's just like me!  
I live there too!  
Then goes down  
to the river and  
prays to the sea.**

**18 April 2024**

**= = = = =**

**I left a nickel  
on the table  
in a Viennese cafe.  
How asy it is  
to be a part of history.**

**18.IV.24**

**=====**

**The girl in the legend  
turned into a swan.  
Or was it the other way round?**

**Identity is so difficult  
in this unyielding patriarchy,  
mothers imprisoned  
for their sons' sins.**

**18.IV.24**

**=====**

**Not sure a shambles  
exactly, no blood or gore  
on or in it but still  
an idea lies in ruins  
so passing children ask  
“Whar’s that?” but who  
can answer them? Drive on  
or read on and pay your taxes.  
Republic used to mean  
the people’s thing  
but what does meaning mean?**

**18.IV,24**

**= = = =**

**More rose petals  
on the table.  
Time must have  
brushed them with  
her skirt as she passed.**

**19 April 2024**

**=====**

**In high school  
it was ancient Rome,  
in college 17th century  
England, graduate  
school the Middle Ages.  
Wonder when comes next.**

**19.IV.24**



=====

**When I know exactly  
what I want to say  
there's no point in saying it.  
Saying should be searching  
for what I don't know**

.

**19.IV.24**

== == == == ==

**I love Venice  
not for history and art,  
just for the sea.  
Half-city, half-city.  
New York comes close,  
islands and some shore,  
more bridges than Venice,  
water never far away.  
Gerritsen Beach,  
Sheepshead Bay and me.**

““

**19.IV.24**

=====

**Hard to prove it  
but there is a will  
running us around.**

**Spirit of a stranger,  
ghost of the not-gone.  
Some days you can feel it,  
memories shuddering**

**or just a little tremble  
in the calendar,  
anniversaries, wars  
beginning, riots put down.**

**Who is talking in you now?  
It's as if the machine  
cut out for a few seconds,  
you hear the silence,  
then it starts again,  
you hear it and you know.**

**19.IV.24**

## IN IRISH AMERICA

Before beer sold in tin cans became the norm, the Irish in New York would carry a big covered iron pail to the *beer saloon* (never called anything else) and have it filled with draft beer fresh from the tap and hurry home with it.

This was called rushing the growler. Sounded like that, but what word was it?

Often I heard my father and uncles reminisce about those days, but never seemed to explain the phrase that fascinated me.

Years later I chanced to wonder what *growler* would look like if it were maybe really a Gaelic word.

My guess was *Gráile*. There it was. Thegrail found yet again.

19.IV.24

=====

**Soft, cloud,  
spring day.  
It is as if we  
live by color,  
this morning  
by green alone.**

**2.  
Perception  
is reception.  
So many things  
around us, no  
wonder it takes  
so long to wake.**

**3.**

**The Saracens swept  
in from the desert  
and conquered the cities  
that conquered them.**

**Not so much to see  
in the desert,  
but so very much to be.**

**4.**

**Countryside,  
country life,  
turkey on the lawn,  
book from Germany**



wren screaming by her nest,  
postcard from Poland,  
magnolia in blossom,  
golden forsythia more  
flourishing abundant  
than I've ever seen,  
empty chairs around the table  
one of them stacked with books,  
and on her wrist  
a ruby bracelet new  
come from India.

5.

**Strange the way  
that elsewhere  
always ends up here.  
I dreamt a science explaining  
how we can speak  
directly to the minds  
of people far away by  
a new technique of seeing  
them precisely in your  
own mind. Precisely.  
I couldn't do it. Feeling  
kept getting in the way.**

**6.  
He walked up the hill**

**with normal on his back,  
shook it off and came down  
babbling about birds  
and colors and the shapes  
of leaves. Nobody notices  
when you're really different.**

**7.**

**Sandstone. Can't leave  
without telling you that.  
Strata by the river  
again and again. Geology  
is the secret psychology.  
Walk along the stone  
or just drive by slow  
and let it read your mind.**

**It looks like ten thousand  
pages cracked together,  
it feels like an altar,  
it begins, just begins,  
to teach you how to pray.**

**20 April 2024**

=====

**Half cup of coffee  
empty glass—  
sounds like a song,  
don't it. Blend of two  
dark roasts from last night,  
still delicious. The air  
in the glass still full  
of what we live on.  
Sounds like a trombone  
way back in the mind.**

**20.IV.24**

**=====**

**Nowhere, or nearly.  
Walk along some water,  
call it my private Thames,  
hunker down on one of those  
ancient stone benches  
at the back of the mind  
and guess what lights  
those are you sprinkle so  
freely across the river.  
All kinds of people over there  
waiting for you to decide,  
luckily most of them asleep.**

**20 April 2024**

**= = = = =**

**In his childhood  
he stood at the prow  
of his house's address  
to see where those very  
numbers would carry him  
over the silent waves  
of his unfocused desires.**

**2.**

**Years later he spotted  
those very numbers  
ornamental in gilt bronze  
on a college gate.  
So he went in.**

**3.**

**What could he do  
with a college degree  
except transmit it  
to others, year after  
year of them, so many.**

**4.**

**Turns out education is  
an old song he couldn't  
get out of his head.**

**21 April 2024**



== ==

I dreamt a tall pole  
gold ball on top  
stood up straight  
on the lawn but no flag.  
I cannot find a flag to fly.

21.IV.24

**== ==**

**Grey the light  
or sly with new leaves.  
Petals Sunday eve of Pesach,  
all matter made of light.  
Let me hold it in my hands.**

**21.IV.24**

====

If I drew a line as long  
as the ink in the pen  
would let me keep going  
where would I be?

Could I survive  
what I had said?  
No wonder geography  
is silent poetry.

21.IV.24

=====

*Rhonda was a Welsh girl  
Rhonda was a priest,  
she brought a jug of water  
to bless us at the feast,*

the jug was clay she made  
herself, it had slim lips  
to kiss us with but oh  
the feast is far we hurry to,  
over the river, climb hills  
to find the earth beneath,  
soft stone of all we touch,  
blessed in some dream we share.

21.IV.24

## FAMILY SQUABBLES

I have a right  
to say it, the river  
has the right  
to wash it away.  
The sandstone smiles.

2.  
Brother and sister  
restless quarreling,  
the river tattles to the sea.

**3.**

**I tell too much  
about myself  
by talking about you.**

**4.**

**Who ever heard  
the inmost trill  
of the ruby kinglet's  
song at the window  
will understand and  
maybe forgive me for  
trying to get the right time  
to knock on your door.**

**5.**

**The heart beats so fast  
I'm not sure I caught  
every word. Now I sit  
in the sunshine calmly  
trying to invent  
what I was too slow  
to hear what it said.**

**22 April 2024**

= = = = =

**Pause at the scullery  
window, pass in  
a dirty dish. Pull  
a clean one off the cabinet,  
slip it on the dumbwaiter  
and send it up. Easy.  
But no scullery, no  
dumbwaiter, barely an up.  
All I have is the dirty dish.**

**22.IV.24**



=====

***JR 1931-2024***

**Lit the candle,  
scented wax  
perfumed the room  
subtly but clear.  
The way scent hides  
in things, bright pain  
of release. Why  
do things seem to have to  
die so we can know  
what or who they really are?**

**22.IV.24**

=====

**Still not sure  
where Paris came from  
when he met Helen  
and carried her off to.  
Some say Troy,  
some say Finland.  
i say he's still on the way  
and she's getting impatient.**

**22.IV.24**

**= = = = =**

**S sometimes I think we're all  
pilgrims, stuck in nice places,  
waiting for the next convoy  
of mad devotees to snatch us up  
and bring us with them  
on the way to...mommy,  
where does this road go?**

**22.IV.24**

====

**The world seems inhabited,  
it must be morning.**

**The desert island of sleep.**

**island with no sea,**

**is over now. I detect**

**human traces, car door**

**slamming but no motor,**

**mailman saying hello,**

**someone knows my name,**

**someone knows I'm here.**

**2.**

**Walk the deck slowly,**

**the raccoon has been at work,**

**the ravaged trash can  
looks like a toppled  
vase of flowers, bright,  
plastic, easy to set right,  
Walk slow. Things  
have changed in the night.**

**3.**

**Inhabited. Did they come back  
or did I scramble here alone.  
Doesn't matter, only matter  
matters, the world we hear  
singing when we close  
those eager eyes of ours.**

**4.**

**Since things can think  
I mustbe a thing too,  
yes? Act thingly,  
speak good thinglish,  
come home for supper,  
hungry, wordy, devout.**

**5.**

**This is more of my hylonoetic  
propaganda, things  
think, things talk to us  
all night, all day too  
if we but listen.**

**Who put these silly ideas  
in yourh ead? Sandstone  
of Ulster Landing,  
clamshells of Rockaway.**

**23 April 2024**

== ==

**Wonderwheel, of course.  
Riesenrad, gewiss.  
But here I stand  
helpless as Luther  
on the g.d. ground.  
They fly up the sky  
fat daylight, soon come back.  
Five steps up to the porch,  
bad mood I'm in,  
if I had wings they  
wouldn't work  
and my therapist  
is always out to lunch.**

**23.IV.24**



== ==

**We met at the Opera  
it was wise but wonderful,  
green music from when  
we were first getting used to  
steel mills on our rivers.**

**We met at the Opera  
and afterwards went our  
separate ways after shaking hands  
and under our hands something was  
left  
a touch not of each other**

**but of the music—**

**I can't remember a note of it now  
but it veins through me, lets me  
move and speak.**

**2324.IV.24**

**= = = = =**

**1.**

**Name me again, sharp mandolin,  
pluck the words  
straight out of the sounds  
between the soft clangor  
of your strings quivering,  
making the earth spin.**

**2.**

**The words are there,  
hidden in the vast Judean  
desert we call the mind**

where the world stored them  
till sound sings them out,  
ram's horn or gyaling,  
the word came first  
then made us to pronounce it.

3.

Picture a child  
playing at an empty  
cardboard box  
ordinary any weekday  
too young for school,  
hear him tap on the box  
with the side of his thumb  
then the tip of a finger.

**Everything comes from this.  
Presently he'll look up  
and call you by a valid name—  
any word will do.**

**24 April 2024**

**=====**

**If the pencil suddenly  
turns into an eraser  
in your hand  
what does it tell you.  
Unsay what you have said,  
how far back or all of it  
or top while you're ahead?  
I fight with this very day  
at the keyboard, since  
laptops have a mind of my own.**

**24.IV.24**

=====

**Flowers. Their own.  
Colors shapes textures  
theirs. Sometimes I think  
it's wrong to name them,  
I mean give them names  
and think they're theirs.  
Maybe there's a flower  
for every word in the lexicon  
and with a little humility  
devotion and care we  
might someday hear  
what each one says.**

**24.IV.24**

=====

Have you ever been to Donegal  
*la la la la LA,*  
yes but only once  
I mean I mean here I am,  
close by the river  
close by the hill Oh  
theology unfading flower!

24.IV.24



=====

If I had to begin  
I'd start with an empty  
cardboard box  
tossed on its side  
in a vacant lot,  
a target scrawled  
n it, an arrow  
piercing it aloud  
shot by a boy a hundred  
feet away. We would have  
all the ingredients for  
love songs, the aim,  
the arrow, the emptiness.

**2.**

**But beginning has to wait.  
Nothing urgent. Nothing now.  
Green fields all the way  
down to the river.  
That's what it is.  
You know the song.**

**3.**

**But what do I do  
about wanting to start?  
They told you in school  
you've got the wheels  
you don't have a road.**

**They meant I'm talking  
to myself; now  
how can I answer me?**

**4.**

**The box sings  
when you hit it  
even no arrow  
just the hand.**

**Music answers all questions—  
you pay your money  
and you fall asleep.**

**5.**

**Arrow, no bow.  
No blood in the box.**

**All in the head  
and safest there.**

**6.**

**All day the sun  
alone in the sky.  
Not until it gets dark  
can we see who we all are.**

**7.**

**Dog looking at him,  
time to go home,  
retrieve the arrow,  
you only have one.**

**Leave the box, at ease  
among all the debris.  
walk north on the sidewalk,  
that's what earth is for.**

**24 April 2024**

=====

**How was Passover.  
It's over. No it isn't,  
not till tomorrow  
if ever. Nothing ever  
really is. Every gesture  
goes on forever, one more  
mark on the oldest manuscript.**

**25 April 2024**

=====

**So open the door,  
free the hawser from the cleat,  
start the engine,  
cross the river,  
Climb the tower,  
wipe a cloud away  
and kiss the moon.  
You can do it in daylight,  
even, a piece of toast  
in your hand. This  
is potency. This is now.**

**25.IV.24**

**=====**

**Wait a while  
the fish will show,  
the carp of Barrytown  
rise to the net.  
The teacher taught them  
no need to do  
anything but want.  
Want and get married  
to what you want,  
rise gently to the net.**

**25.IV.24**



=====

**Hemoglobin afternoon,  
is that the sun  
roaring through curtains,  
is that the river  
murmuring Mahler  
as I try to sleep?  
The pesky little stream  
runs all through us,  
we wake as it hums.  
This body stuff that we  
so love, so are— sometimes  
rather be a leaf and float away.**

**25.IV.24**

== ==

**Open the larder  
let the food out  
back to the fields and floods  
it was captured from.  
Look at the bare cabinet,  
ask: What now, body?  
What will sustain you now,  
music on the radio,  
the synthesizer rok  
that drives your car  
while you worry  
or fantasize? Maybe  
fantasy is the answer,  
imagine ourselves**

**as we would be, strong,  
well-fed citizens of  
a catastrophe we can't  
ever get out of our heads.**

**25.IX.24**

=====

**Wake the albacore.  
You know it from  
a tin on the grocery shelf,  
you must have eaten  
plenty in your life,  
tuna, you called it,  
or tyuna as your mother  
said in her Irish way,  
almost chuna you heard.  
But it was albacore  
and in you now, wake it,  
master the Pacific currents,  
lord it over the small fry  
of the sea, the human sea.**

**Now wake all the other  
animals you've eaten,  
start back in childhood  
moo and oink and cock- a-doodle-do,  
be them now,  
all you ever were be now.  
We have to be who we became  
on the way to being us.**

**25.IV.24**

**=====**

**If just for once  
you let me pun  
I would ask just  
what the mail  
is looking for  
that crowds the screen?  
Searching for the fe-mail  
like all the other beasts of prey.  
And I don't feel conjugal today.**

**25.IV.24**

**=====**

**Make the facts  
fit the legend.  
That;s why we come after,  
to clean up the facts  
that hide the truth.**

**25.IV.24**

=====

**That white wall  
I want to cover it  
with words,  
real words,  
like Greek and Hebrew,  
Coptic and Chinese,**

**a wall in the mall.  
Pure white, 200 feet long  
and not a word on it.**

**Not yet.  
I want to write on it,  
Write in Nowish**



**to be read then  
when people learn  
to read again,  
and some of them even remember  
what they too wrote  
so long ago.**

**25.IV.24  
Kingston**

**= = = = =**

**Everything is as it was.  
But now the roses  
on the table are deep red.  
Change doesn't change anything.**

**2.**

**People who have dogs  
tell me how comforting it is  
to live with something  
you never really know  
what it's thinking  
and doesn't bite.**

**3.**

**I love to hear what people say,  
I keep asking questions  
so I can keep hearing  
the strings of their harps.**

**4.  
All of which is to say.**

**5.  
Sometimes an absolute  
slips into the conversation.  
Look the other way,  
watch the cat shake  
raindrops out of his fur.**

**6.**

Sometimes I think  
poets think  
philosophy is nonsense,  
all that fuss about  
what is or isn't even there,  
whereas, as Yeats  
observed, that  
girl standing there.

7.

Bedrock. Don't  
take that word apart.  
Ohio Michigan primary shield.  
A 2.8 tremor shakes the hill  
out here, the stylus  
skips on the vinyl,

**music interrupts itself  
to jump ahead.**

**Progress is difficult,  
a cup slops into the sink  
but doesn't break.**

**I was there.**

**We called it California then  
but who really knows?**

**8.**

**Advantages of atmosphere.**

**We're here.**

**At least we call it here.**

**We breathe,**

**we have to breathe,**

**life is a cooperation.**

**Existence isn't. See  
that rock over there?  
It's a lot older than me  
but gave up breathing long ago.  
But I think it goes on dreaming.**

**9.  
Flashlight battery  
click on click off.  
Who needs earthquakes  
when we have hands?**

**10.**

**Meserole Street  
the little park  
and Mahler.  
Where it started,  
Friends give us music,  
that's how it works.  
His father was a florist  
so there must  
have been roses too.**

**26 April 2024**

**== = ==**

**I heard your hat  
topple on the table,  
straw big-brimmed  
on polished maple.  
O thingly earth  
you touch us to life.**

**26.IV.24**



== == == == ==

**It lisps a little  
when it slips in,  
infant stream to  
mother river.**

**We hear it, watch  
the ducks decipher  
all the little currents  
their side of the main flow.**

**26.IV.24**

== ==

**Over the hill to Ridgewood  
to buy cheese, gruyere  
from Finland I found  
better than France.**

**And they cut it for you too,  
a four-inch chunk  
from a fourteen inch loaf  
wrapped in foil. Go work  
in the church library,  
ride home over the hill  
between the cemeteries,  
Christian one side,  
Jewish on the other,  
praying with them both,**

**stone gated-monument,  
so many names, graves,  
wish I had a cigarette,  
so much life to live.**

**26.IV.24**

=====

**We working in the woods  
were silenced suddenly  
by sight of a bird  
subtly bright colored  
a pheasant crossing  
meadowland just beyond  
our trees.**

**What can we do  
with what we have seen?**

**Each of us goes home alone  
a little sad at having seen  
such a beautiful animal**

**and having to leave it,  
where will its beauty take us  
now trying to know  
what it means too have seen, does  
your love know what it means. What  
obligation  
is imposed on by what we see? is The  
world is there over and over  
pounding on our door  
beauty by beauty.**

**26/27.IV.24**

=====

**Sometimes seeing  
a red rose is a little  
like region of French novel,  
late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup>,  
just before Stendhal say,  
when stones were stones  
and love sprt of meant love.**

**26/27.IV.24**

**standology**

**it heard**

**when I said something**

**else. So now**

**I have a new**

**science I must learn**

**and teach and preach.**

**From the look of it**

**it shouldn't be too complex.**

**But can I do it in my easy chair?**

**27.IV,24**

=====

**Residual roses  
red as ever,  
we bring our weather  
out of dream.**

**Milk in the scupper?  
Cream of sea foam,  
let the carriage wait,  
the horse is sleeping,  
like all the rest of us,  
learning, learning.**

**27 April 2024**



=====

**Relax the dawn  
we won't need it  
till tomorrow,  
thank it tenderly  
though for all  
it has done and will  
do just by waking us,  
making us be here.  
Now let the coffee  
that stirs us  
puts her to sleep.**

**27.IV.24**

=====

**Put the back of your hand  
against the keyhole  
to feel the day's weather,  
what we keep outside.  
Now you can dare the door—  
is there anybody there?**

**27.IV.24**

=====

**Someone came to see us  
only yesterday  
but who was she?  
Boyish in her girlish way,  
she left her shadow on our wall.**

**27.IV.24**

=====

Elementary school,  
oh if only it really were  
and did, and taught  
every one of us the facts,  
the elements themselves,  
C, O, H, N, could be  
the family next door,  
teach me all the sacred differences, o  
silver me,  
mind me molybdenum.  
then give me the actual  
one by one, as in the world,  
a parrot feather,  
a sealskin coat, a bite

**of cheese from Abondance.  
No more opinions,  
leave the holy dead  
peacefully unchronicled.  
There is no history.**

**27.IV.24**

**=====**

**The dictionary comes later.  
Listen to how the sea pronounces the  
dock,  
Even with no ship there,**

**The ship comes later,  
it is a child come home,  
any child to any home,**

**The coast is made that way always  
welcoming  
whoever is speaking.**

**27/28.IV.24**

=====

**Science fiction was invented  
by a raspberry bush  
growing in a fern brake,  
just an ordinary bush  
with bright red berries  
pebbled to the touch  
softer on the tongue.**

**That's how the whole thing began,  
deep knowing  
said wait a minute this**

**is just as it is, there must be some  
other way for things to be. not this  
way but that way,**

**the other way beyond the stars in  
that other Kingdom**

**where raspberries are blue**

**and fall from the sky like snow**

**at Christmas time a thousand**

**years before Christ is born.**

**2728.IV.24**



=====

**Rambunctious**  
**we used to say,**  
**a rodeo in the living room,**  
**all horses and no riders.**  
**Then peace would happen,**  
**unaccountable calm.**

**2.**  
**Follow the word,**  
**the word knows.**  
**How many times**  
**have I said so before?**  
**Never enough, so listen**  
**to my bassoon again.**

**3.**

**Trying to make  
someone happy  
is the noblest job  
of all, and the one  
I'm worst at. Let me go  
down to the river  
where my kind mother  
took lessons from the swans.**

**4.**

**Getting my way  
is always in the way  
of someone else.**

**Lord, teach me  
to step aside.**

**5.  
Meditate with me,  
,mind the puddle  
by the door, it fits  
the music, can't  
sweep it away.**

**6.  
Trying to say  
let the words  
think for me.  
Whatever caverns**

**of fear and doubt  
the mind shrinks into,  
the words are here. Here.**

**28 April 2024**

=====

**Spring's escutcheon  
gleams on the magnolia,  
roadsides gold-furred  
with forsythia. There.  
Everything has been given.  
Now wash hands  
and get to work.**

**28.IV.24**

=====

The older you get  
the more people you know  
who migrate south in winter.  
Money has something  
to do with it, but it's not  
all about spending.  
They come back north  
in springtime changed.  
We don't change much  
up here, snow showers,  
cuckoo clock and we're done.  
But they have a different  
look in the eye, catamarans,,  
swamps a-slither,

**sea water warm  
as their own skin.**

**Palm trees do something  
to the soul, our friends  
have been in Jerusalem  
without noticing it,  
they are changed yet  
they don't know it,  
should I tell them?**

**We are by-products  
of wherever we have been.**

**28.IV.24**

**=====**

**Say it again,  
the grizzly bear,  
the wolverine.**

**Then the stragglers  
from Siberia.  
Then came us,**

**whoever we are,  
reddish, brownish,  
pale.**

**We are not  
supposed to know  
more than that.**



**The brown tree  
has white flowers.  
Apple. Magnolia.  
Leave it at that.**

**29 April 2024**

**= = = = =**

**Flad mind, sad body.  
I must make  
both of them persist.**

**29.IV.24 *lune***

=====

**A fish made of flowers  
swims through the air.  
I have had quite enough  
of the plausible, I need  
a vacation in otherness,  
palm tree on the ice floe,  
full moon turned inside out.**

**29.IV. 24**

=====

**Always the different,  
never the dull. Her owl  
stays with us a while.  
Then the maypole topples,  
the middle ages refuse to end,  
they speak weird Latin  
in Havana but at least it's warm.  
Body conquers all  
except itself. Carve that  
on your pediment of parliament,  
but a working man  
can still whistle  
as he walks down your street.**

**29.IV.24**

=====

Mocking bird  
in the parking lot,  
blue sky east  
cloudbank west  
layered with light—  
what are they telling me?

2.

And the white wall  
best of all,  
a hundred yards  
and not a word on it,  
Not yet.

29.IV.24 Kingston

## MAY EVE

The world came back  
while we slept,  
pileated woodpecker  
thrilled without pecking,  
the wren worried loudly,  
we were here, the whole  
glorious anxiety all round.

2.

Walpurgisnacht they say,  
bonfires, witches, the big  
scene in Faust. Strange  
day to be born—some of us  
are born every day.

**3.**

**But this is special,  
don't ask me why.  
The organdy flutters  
at the window, movement  
signifies life, why  
do we need proof?  
Capriole! Thunderclap!  
Have you ever watched  
a violinist sleep?**

**4.**

**Two rose-breasted grosbeaks,  
male, at peace  
on adjacent branches.**

**Solemn contentment  
of being who one is,  
to[ banker dozing at his desk.**

**5.**

**Gee Whiz they used to print  
in cartoons to tell  
what they thought we  
were saying, we, the people  
trapped in language,  
were saying. We said  
no such thing. And language  
was our way out—  
we were really saying  
something altogether else.**



**6.**

**That's why it's urgent  
to greet each new day  
with as close to bird song  
as you can get. Doing so  
no effort ever fails.**

**7.**

**So it's May Eve,  
night of dreams and doubts—  
who was that man  
I saw you dancing with  
tomorrow, when the sun winked?**

**8.**

**Maybe now, maybe soon,  
rabbits prancing through ferns,  
crows chase hungry hawks away.**

**9.**

**Five thousand years  
they've been telling us  
soul goes, body stays.  
No resurrection,  
just tomorrow morning.**

**10.**

**Stop glooming, sir,  
get off the train,  
walk uphill from the station,**

**watch the forsythia,  
greet the new lilacs  
just bloomed today,  
just like you.**

**11.**

**Most people look clumsy  
on their way to the car,  
rumbling the cart forward  
through the crowded lot.  
Some seem spry though,  
even elegant—these are the ones  
who carry nothing,  
empty handed as they began.  
So it is with dreamless sleep.**

12.

I grew up loving maps,  
potent territorial pornography,  
intimate inspections  
of places that for all I knew  
didn't even exist,  
or only half-way exist  
on earth, like movie stars.  
And maps leave out  
the time of day,  
the shadows of that fortress  
quivering across the Rhine,  
daybreak on my planet.  
But where am I?  
What river runs by me?  
What language bounds me in?

**13.**

**We have long lives  
to give us time  
to get over childhood.  
We have to live longer  
these days since childhood  
has been made even denser  
with detail and solitary electronic  
diversions.  
But for all we do to  
try to grow past it,  
there is always  
that bird at the window  
and we are children again.**

**And that distant music at dusk,  
the tune you know so well  
but can't name,  
it tells us we'll never  
really get over it.  
Once born, born for good.**

**30 April 2024**

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*for Billie*

I wanted to give you a flower  
but it turned into a word.  
I asked what word  
but it turned into a forest  
not far from town,  
a maiden was walking there  
a few hundred years ago  
touching birch bark gently,  
recalling how old tribes  
used to write on bark  
the few things they really  
had to remember.

**Then suddenly the girl  
was now, a woman  
walking in the woods,  
humming a little,  
then fitting a few words  
to the song and I could  
almost make out the words.**

**30 April 2024**