Light snow has
lovelied it again.
The sheeted living
drive the silver street—

snow is always echo
of something said
far, and you hear it
always after, calling you,
calling some word
you almost understand.

10 January 2014
The need of it
to be now!

Giving and giving
the unstinting answer

one more of those
all worlds are full of—

if you can perceive it
at all, that’s what it means.

10 January 2014
INKWELL OF THE ROSE

One wants. A top
spun by another child
wobbles into your life.

Yours but you don’t
own it either.
Transference

is always too easy.
Cross the street
walk the other side

the shadows longer
and no children play
scaring you with their

happiness it seems to be.
Be happy with me
instead is what you say

to any shadow
by the lamp post
stone steps to the café.

No one belongs
to anyone you think,
our miserable liberty.

10 January 2014
Shake the book
till a word falls out.
That one.
Now parse its past,
etymology, run it
(Olson used to say)
till it tests out
and you begin to know
what is is carrying
to you. All those years.
No book can tell
till you do this. Do
the work.

Run with the word
all the way back
then comes again.
Now in the prison
of the ordinary
you have a key.
It has begun
for instance to snow
and you alone know why.

10 January 2014
The pronouns are the most technical vocabulary we have. Each depends on an intimate awareness of a vast, intricate array of locations and motions. How else could we know what this means?

10 January 2014
AVORIAZ

means snow in Venusian
I know it only in summer if that
a decade between summers
in the High Savoy
between the Little Boundary
and St John of the Alps.

A sign, an arrow, a distance in meters.
What more do you need to know a place?
As when I was a child the little wooden
parkway signs at the end of the West
Side Highway said New England and North
and I have lived there ever since.

10 January 2014
Dense mist
and crows in it
sailing big
to little branches—
high thirties
and the snow
messy, ice
lurks underfoot
wariness of
come and go—
short-breath’d
the day anew
This sumptuous
light half
hidden in the seeds
of water this mist
must. I want
to be like this.
And want to
be forever.

11 January 2014
POSTCARD FROM A RAINY MORNING

Yesterday nine
deer in the yard—
who am I telling
this to? They
knew already.

11 January 2014
I think in Sicily
a stone father
crushing his son
tenderly I think
inside the stone
the ancient yearning
of the interior
to be out there,
here, among the
arrogant daylight.

11 January 2014
American birthday, mine—
One Deer
the one I saw at dusk last night
(when the Mayan like the Hebrew day begins)
nibbling dry corn—
one of the nine who’d been earlier to visit.
Shapes in the snow color of the trees
can only see them when they move,
color as if the earth they stand on
were bent to feed, feed on itself
and he’s a part of her
and we too, and so
may it be with all the year,
happy birthday to me.

12 January 2014
Day 1-Quiej
Wait and find the rule mathematics childbirth in the sky

but could one of us really be the side of a triangle and all love dependent, codependent?

Which side, which kind? The glamorous soprano comes upstage and sings:

I am the hypotenuse of a scalene triangle, you are the little side, chéri, I’m all my life waiting for the long one

and all that turns into music. We listen with null ears—surd — and then the number begins again. But we have ears only for our eyes, the lovely personage down there on high.

12 January 2014
It’s good now and then to watch the sun rise we’ve seen it go down so many times.

13 January 2014
A BOOK OF IMAGES

Image:
a small lily
white, pinkish within
its structure down there
obscured by a woman
dressed for business
holding a newborn
fawn in her arms.

Image:
A large map
of South America
laid out on broadloom.
Two white children
are asleep on it.
Their cat is keeping watch.

Image:
On an open palm
a coin: a denarius
in the middle of it—
a man’s voice says
“denarius” in puzzled
tone, French accent.

(See, sometimes an image speaks. Only a fool thinks
images are silent, or are only images of seen things.)
Image:
A chair creaking
no one sitting on it.
The moon
almost full
in the windowpane.

(It isn’t that one wants one image or another. An image wants us.)

(It’s not like some famous writer who chooses an expensive woolen jacket to be photographed wearing as he sits like a squire on a rustic bench. No, the jacket chooses us.)

Image:
A sky pale behind winter trees.
A boy looking out the window at them and it: his love is divided, not for the last time.

Image:
A blind man
is writing with a pen.
It has run out of ink
and he begins to suspect it.
Image:
An old-fashioned alarm clock with two bells on top. A woman stuffs it down among her husband’s socks in the chest of drawers to muffle the sound of time.

Image:
Earliest morning the moment when the grass turns green.

Image:
A huge figure on the horizon straddling the earth, doing something to the Sun he holds between his hands.

(Earth and sky grow bright together. There is deep meaning in this. We are one person and only one.)

Image:
A woman touching her ear as if to say Speak to me louder, I can’t hear you, louder. I am language already I just need to hear you.
(Don’t wait for morning to wake up. The deer, with their poor vision but keen sense of smell, are up betimes. They are waiting for you to do something. They have been waiting for a thousand years.)

Image:
A television screen is showing a snowstorm to an empty room. In the next room, visible through an open door, a woman is sobbing.

(Everyone has a mother. Or has had one a while. But who is she now? Or when she is not only your mother?)

(An image is not only a what, it is a when. That is the mystery of everything seen. Or any thought at all. Whn is it, and to whom?)

Image:
An elderly white man shaking pepper onto two poached eggs. Behind his back a young woman is staring out the window, where nothing is to seen.

Image:
An empty sports car, open, is parked under a palm tree. What can they be thinking?
A turtle is crossing a lonely highway. A boy is watching it, wondering if it’s safe to pick it up and hurry it safely to its destination. You can see the worry in the boy’s face. Danger. Contamination. Disease. Bite. Alien contact. Failure. Could drop it, hurt it. And maybe the turtle wants to do it this way. Nobody knows. Nobody knows. There are tears in the boy’s eyes.

A clock tower casts a shadow across an empty plaza right to left. The hands are at 8:12.

A couple in Victorian clothes walking by the sea, keep to the damp sand near the arriving waves. She holds a parasol, he holds her free arm. Elbow. They are far away, just silhouettes, really.

A pair of glasses, negative diopter lenses, strong, rest on an open book printed in Pali script. Across the room a parakeet, blue, is active in its cage,
interviewing the little round mirror that keeps it company.

Image:
a large white seabird
lands on sand,
stumbles, rights itself,
comes to rest.
A fishing boat has just
come into view
after rounding the cape.

(You think you were born here? Nothing could be further than the truth. Every morning a new adventure, an education, a catastrophe, a song. Everything we see we see for the first time.)

Image:
Two girls, perhaps mermaids, hard to tell, are swimming side by side in the sea, coming straight towards the viewer. Will they pause on either side of you? Will they pass you by?

Image:
A zoo, all the cages empty.
A light snow is falling.
A sheet of paper blows along the ground,
you try to pick it up to read
but it’s only an image, only part of an image and an image has no parts.
Image:
A highway seen from above. Heavy traffic in both directions. Below us, three crows pass from right to left in flight — their shadows, distinct on the ground, interrupted by passing cars, so the shadows go up (car roof) and down (roadbed) like music. Like music.

Image:
a Crow pecking at a dry ear of corn. Each kernel he plucks free he tosses into the air where it becomes a star and flies away.

Image:
In an apartment building, on the eleventh floor, a kitchen window is open onto an air shaft. A potted geranium is on the window ledge. A butterfly of some sort has just landed on it. Or moth. Who can tell?

(The precision of images is not the kind of precision that words know and can recite.)
Image:
A child learning Latin from a book
his fingers toying with cracker crumbs
while he repeats
words under his breath.
A candle flickers on the table.
Graham crackers.

13 January 2014