Can this be the ordinary animal?

So many were waiting at the zoo that day
For their first sight of what had never
Been shown in this country before,

The Ordinary Animal, not a lion not an elk
Not a snake and not an owl,
Something before and beyond them all

They could hear it moving around in its enclosure
A building big enough for an elephant
But the sounds it made weren’t very big

Fluttering more than stomping, but with some writhing
And rearing and growling in it too.
Smart people kept their eyes on the keepers

Who looked worried. Am I completely in control
Of this situation? is not a doubt confined to zoo attendants
And there seemed to be police on the edges of the crowd.

You can never be too careful.
In the other pools and cages the animals were silent
As if they too were in for a big surprise

And why not, since they were even closer to the Rule
Of which they were such distinct exceptions.
And here comes the rule itself

The doors are opening the cameramen are praying
Even the pickpockets and perverts are paying attention
Then suddenly it was there, docile, in plain sunlight,

Its large eyes looking easily about this way and that,
The ordinary animal no one had ever dreamed of before,
Gentle, strong, handsome, a little scary,

But it looked tired too, a little frightened,
And strangely old, old, as if it had been traveling for years
To come so new into the world.

13 January 2001
Why do you play your flute?

— Because a doctor meets only the sick.

Why don’t I hear it when you play?

— You haven’t run your fingers down my skin.

Who taught you music?

— I never learned, I only forgot.
all my learning
is forgetting

all my touching
is letting go

13 January 2001
There’s something simple
I have to say.
There, I’ve said it at last.

14 January 2001
{DIG~IR} Nin-żu-g~ir2  {DIG~IR} Nina-Ur g~al-lu2 šir-bur-la (=Lagāš) dumu Gu-ni-du ud eš3-Zu-G~ir2 mu-du3 a mu-ru. e2 {DIG~IR} Nina mu-du3; g~al-ib mu-du3; ki-nir mu-du3; ba-ga mu-du3; e2-dam mu-du3; e2 Ga2-tum3-dug3 mu-du3; ti-as2(aga)x-ra mu-du3.

When Ur-{GOD}Nina (servant of {GOD}Nina, Lady of the Water), king of Lagash (šir-bur-la, ‘abundance of lamps’), son of Gu-ni-du (possibly Akkadian: cf. Arabic jundiyyun, ‘soldier’), verily built the temple of G~irzu (sword-skill), verily (he) dedicated (it) to Ning~irzu (Lady of Sword Skill). (He) verily built the House of {GOD}Nina; (he) verily built the Great Weir; (he) verily built the Orchard; (he) verily built the Dairy; (he) verily built the House of the Wives; (he) verily built the House of Gatumdug (Sweet Bearer of the Cup); (and he) verily built the Archery Range (ti-ra-ásagx).

When Urnina, servant of Nina, the Goddess of Waters, King of Shirburla the City of Lights, son of Gunidu the Warrior, when he built the temple of Swordskill, he dedicated it to Ningirzu, Lady of Sword Skill. Yea, he built the House of the Goddess Nina, he built the great Weir; he built the Orchard, he built the House of Cows, he built the House of Wives, yea, he built the House of Gatumdugu, the Sweet Cupbearer, and he built the Place of the Arrows.

And Nina’s waters Anna’s waters Annan’s waters
Walk quietly today past this house.
Time to let some of it speak.
Only a little — the Weinberg
Of Santa Maddalena in Bolzano

Church, hill, house where a friend was born,
The vineyard of my friend — a Bible sound
To where we were.

Find a place to eat. The eternal veal
Of Italy, mithraic bones of rock and hill
The never boring darkness inside the wine.

15 January 2001
Something old I found tomorrow

Because everything comes down to you

_Song song old underwear_

I thought what it is like when it is when and why
I thought no better than a _song with bread_

_So much much for thinking_

Or how so often when a call comes it is
What one is doing when waiting for a call

the nerves you touch

in calling are calling

16 January 2001
HORN

how close and then
or the horns of an ox
which one of them
has picked up from the ground
and scooped it hollow
to hold their what

what do they own
they would stuff into a horn

they who would try to pack a cloud into a knife

who bring out little magazines
and run away when the little words actually mean

16 January 2001
I need to keep a diary
To keep my poems clear of my life
And my life clear of poetry

But is this a diary entry or a poem?
Or just a bad idea?

17 January 2001
THREE STUDIES FROM THE ZODIAC

Tail ripeness
Change
Invisible head moon woman ocean sun
Message good luck heaven man

Head heaven
Ripeness invisible good luck change ocean
Message woman sun man
Moon.

Moon change ocean tail
Good luck
Man sun message woman head
Heaven ripeness invisible

17 January 2001
escort by dream

tabled motion
: reviewed by judges
at the long trestle

your whole life

18 January 2001
Liar’s Lyres
My new book

Leave out all the words
And something’s still there

Next morning
Girl gone head lightninged

Hangover of the poem

18 I 01
pick word in other tongue
tip means \{compassion without pity
love without cling
touch without grasp
responsibility without ownership\}

or as we say in Panslavic:
\[\chiομπασσιον \omega/ο πιτη
λοσε \omega/ο χλινγ
τουχη \omega/ο γραζπ
ρεςπονςιβιλιτς \omega/ο οωνερσημπ\]

while the wise men of old said
\[\chiομπασσιον \omega/ο πιτη
λοσε \omega/ο χλινγ
τουχη \omega/ο γραζπ
ρεςπονςιβιλιτς \omega/ο οωνερσημπ\]

maybe there is no way to say it at all.

18 January 2001
“She will only give it to the clean pirates”

do something to give
give something to clean
and do, and do, and she

will only will only,
give it to the clean
she who will only only

clean on the way
to do something to give
it to the clean

she who will to will
give it to give it to

then who are those pirates who are these
pirates are all the pirates
clean and clean a characteristic of pirates in general

or are there dirty pirates clean pirates and in-between
and she will only be only
then does she mean she will give it only to clean
pirates not only give it to

give it to only to give it to only to give it

who is she giving it to and (here’s the key change)
what is it.

18 January 2001
Cast of cars
A postcard
From a year

A whole
Animal white
Animal brown

Green green grey
Long time ago white Ford

19 January 2001
DEUX ETUDES

1.
Little hand,
little hand

How hard
Music is
To be that easy

*Be small be small*

2.
What a terrible thing music is
That even silence doesn’t silence it.

19 January 2001
Rhinebeck
they sent me an etude
in eleven sharps and one catastrophe

why change your sex
it changes for you
when you get old

until only angels
can tell female from male

and there are no angels.

19 January 2001
Rhinebeck
Blue bells
How many
Months from now

How many mouths
Will grumble
Their complaining noises
That is our Prayer to Spring?

19 January 2001
Rhinebeck
VEGAN

Hurtless
Smell cucumbers
Far off kitchen

Always everybody dreaming.

19 January 2001
Rhinebeck
CAPRICCIO

I’ll have one opera
with some
chamber music on the side
but hold the dying.

19 January 2001
Rhinebeck
A book and its reader
are soon parted.

Reading a lot
teaches promiscuity
if not polygamy.

All those books you love,
‘devour’
then close and move on to the next —

the text that waits for you
over the horizon of the word.

19 January 2001
Rhinebeck
the tenderness sometimes of music
as if this strange interval you’re hearing now
is a childhood friend you suddenly remember
sound of her voice smell of her hair

19 January 2001