But how close anyone is to it
divine entitlement
of staring through the window thinking nothing

that's what I want to think.

in or out
looking is space

space is held inside a place
space runs away outside

but no matter
how far it runs
it's there around me
inside me

and is me, in me, the matter of me,

that's why I want to stare
out the window in at the world.

1 February 2001
organized emptiness
a paper bag
from Dunkin Donuts

I am filled
with the dialect of wanting
the dialectics of desire.

Dear Things, dear substance,
dear opportunity.

Who is this letter
I'm writing to?
Say it the way I think it
Every opportunity
a word on its way to
not yet is it clear where words go.

1 February 2001
Hyde Park
Sometimes the shrill guitar on the muzak
sounds like the ancient Indian veena
as a sign that the gods can reach us
only through obstacles
even our Good Taste, thickest of all our obscurations.

1 February 2001
Hyde Park
Don’t be sky don’t be distance  
Be presence as an absolute  
A sudden squall of snow leaves  
Half an inch of purity atop the mud.  
Just like me. La boue  
Beneath the brain.  
The beast. How romantique  
Of moi. No beast, no brain, no mud.  
Just an ordinary why.

2 February 2001
It is important to lift the ink up
with the pen, the pen with the hand
the hand moved by the word I mean to say
but what moves words?

The small answers of a country evening

Insistent memory that stone has
presses up against our skin
when we walk or give up and lie there
stretched out, aligned with the earth’s magnetic field

and what moves that?

2 February 2001
brackish curve
    into the slipstream behind
    car on a slushed road
quick

the bridge is a dependable catastrophe
over actual departure

into a place that insists on its distance,
toll booth, borderguard, weird flag,
doesn’t matter,
    other country dope-fiend eyes

it was only a river but it kept us apart
we scuttled the sky we swallowed the flow

we absorb ourselves in the abstruse doctrine
of human affect
    you feel me feel.

2 February 2001
THE BOOK OF EXODUS

hit the hammer with the nail
is all I mean
to art the way to men

when women did them all the doing that they’d need
six thousand years before
between screwing angels and drowning pharaohs

and the People stumbled through the desert saying Why Why Why

I choose to inform you I am a very religious personage
down to the broad tips of my black black shoes

2. 
devil country
devil country

sad vistas of conglomerate crap
screeing down from sedimentary strata

now wait a minute wait a minute

g eo l o g y is the strangest science
because no matter what you do
the Laboratory Animal is still alive

and the People tumbled through the question
asking Sky

Sky, Sky?

My point is art’s enough is art’s enough
and art is what we do in our two shoes

art is what I sing on you you sing right back
art is walkstep art is call
art is animal running down the hall

art is your hair flurrying down your back
art is skin

a quiet desert this animal we in fact is dwells.
3.
hit the devil with the animal
leave the hammer in the crystal cave

at any moment the light could fade could fail
we live as we do to take

advantage of every lady comes along
every man who saunters down this busy street.

3 February 2001
SATURDAY NIGHT

1.

lively organ of a smug persuasion
steepled out among gold retrievers
SUVs huphup along suvving along

the filled crust of a somber pie
eternal boredom of a Sunday morn
while infants glom their lewdly nurse

no word makes sense when skin
is still a sin the Bide-ball chains
don’t you believe no ocelot

needs more than spots to make a cat

needs more than sins to make religion.

2.

so the preacher’s spare
and stricts a little Oppen line
to get from midnight onto dawn
by virtue’s turnpike

breathing down the neck of
nobody at all

be focused carefully
on you feel to do and say it
long before you’d rate to touch

3.

better by light, what is?
Better by touch, who is?
Bigger by feel, we are
And then the organ breaks
Sudden into cantharidian chant
The pews are squirming

Beneath the letch of music who
Ever let that choir be
Made up of human bodies each

Particular is heaven and why not.

3 February 2001
Apostolic resemblances colored map at the bottom of the bible
*Paul’s journeys* among the Romes *Twelve Tribes* where they are when they were. Pisgah is here. No Romulus, no Quetzal-coatl, no reddish tough little berries to make rosaries, no east, no dhikr, no display. Breastplate of an absent priest, yes. Blueprints of a broken house. When we were they. My tribe is the corkpulling with our laps small monkey business people and we use shells. We live in the milder hells west of Lithia we tend to be obsessive and we like to squeeze. Enough about me, how are your politics in winter, what god gives you the fish?

4 February 2001
SOFA

sleeping presence close
the sense of someone there
maybe that is enough

enough to be close
to someone sleeping

4 February 2001
ARTICULATE THIGH BONES

Of a stranger animal than any I have ridden or been ridden by so that a bird crying at one a.m. seems almost natural — a lost child hurrying across Russia looking for quality woolens to drape around her heart. These are skaters’ fantasies like the libertarian goose grease that makes newspaper editorials vanish so quickly from the uneasy mind, busy a minute later with its own concerns. To dignify this chatter. What bird was it? Tweed and sharkskin and serge, a weaver’s overstock, a miller’s daughter naked to the sifting meal. I have seen dumber poems written on coarser skin. Let me admit pervasive happiness among my arsenal of technical contrivances. Mood’s all I need, a good education in the pool hall will find all the rest.

If anything more is needed. When the marrow is scooped out the long shaft is washed and dried, fitted with a mouthpiece it says ooo or mmmm or moo. Maybe that’s enough to say. Anything more they’d make a Bible of it and make you obey.

4 February 2001
old wall wet sand snow
old wall wet slate
shade fall people
shabby doorways snow

wet stone curb snow edge
old wall black brick wet
shabby window crack
crack snow old wall wet wall

I want to do more than I can do
crazed by the beauty of this ugly street

5 February 2001
energumen, who,  
a spill of light  
between the cobblestones  
as if the fire  
were a kind of rain  
and ran there  
down the streets  
away from me  
away into that mysterious thrill  
of other people’s names  
famous or nobodies they all had names  
and these names spoke to the child I was  
had awful power,  
Grover Whelan Alice Ficken didn’t matter  
John Nance Garner Arthur de Bra  
The names were the powers who beckoned to me  
At the end of every street,  
They were the lords of cobblestones and trolley tracks  
And green opaque water of the river  
They were what the city meant  

So I said them over and over while I studied the red brick wall  
Topped with broken glass behind which the bad girls were kept  
By sinister nuns, the bad girls, the ones who had taken pleasure.
measured by the blue standard
the cup was very small

I could hold it in one hand a while
and drink almost all of what’s inside

never knowing what that taste was
that lingered after the complicated muscle-work was done

swallowing swallowing like a sky again
with everything in it going away

and the mouth is empty
not even a word

6 February 2001
I knew the ear of corn, I knew the pan of water
I knew the door and the chair
But only the window knew who I am.

6 February 2001
star inspector brittle stucco imitating woodwork
a house is a contingent demonstration of astronomy
the whole sky is mapped as and onto every house you build

as above so below
the broken tiles of genesis scatter in the valley wind

nothing remembers you here, nothing

it all is caught in its own dream, map traced on map
love layering on the simple presences of what seems.

This is me screaming for your help this is screaming.

6 February 2001
CALLING


Call me. Or is calling
the opposite of naming.
Name me. Or is a name
what is given to someone
who is not called.

Call me. Take away my name
and call me.
Call me
until I can do earthly thing but answer.

6 February 2001
reading the trees
the way a spinnaker
reads the wind no a
crow reads the road
no the sky reads the

what is this place on which we stand
to which we give names so grand

7 February 2001
bone of a monkey bone of a man
how old am I if you don’t know?

7 February 2001
flower tree sugar tree tree of milk
the road still knows how to walk

and anybody who walks with it
will hear his conversation still

every path goes through the middle
every voice is actually his voice

7 February 2001
but the thing I really wanted
was hidden in the depths of the temple
stuffed like a mildewed old burlap sack
in between ivory and ivory,

vomit dried on sheets of gold,
wool from no lamb, a lamp that gives no light,

the thing I wanted was caught between everything else
and you could call it this (and you often did)
or you could call it that (and just as often that’s just what you did)

because the reliable condescensions of your view of me
were landmark enough for me to steer by

trying to find the ruined temple
with the shabby bamboo trees too long neglected to make fruit
the roof sagging down full of snakes chasing rats

and the tile floor dangerous with puddles of rain
trying to find the place lost in the boring jungle
the sleeping lepers stretched out on the steps
too sick to beg, the dogs full of sores,

the peace that only a truly terrible place can have
where there is nothing more to lose
nothing more to bother us with hope

and in the depths of that peaceful quiet terrible temple
the terrible thing I wanted and still want
is waiting for me

as if I were its priest and it knew it and called me
to take my place among the rubies and rot.

7 February 2001