As if the quiet light of rain
gave the crows a strange permission
they lend to me

to be quiet in their cries
to say words without intention
words
just part of the weather.

8 July 2001
la part maudite behind

of course it’s what’s behind
in every sense the social
turns its back on feeling
so it can make it out there
where fear is and the knife of money

thin blade of hundred dollar bill

(to go on)

8 July 2001
in memory of SJK 1900-1990

I want to be a house on earth
I want to feel what I feel then forget it
And when the old man dies let them engrave him
Reverently into the annals of the ground

A life writes a word or two when it’s lucky
I bend to hear

8 July 2001
J’ai fringale de tes textes he said
woman at the keyboard
bent on translating
everything there is into this one thing

8 July 2001
J’ai une fringale de ta lune
because it comes and goes
all full of knowing and showing and no.

8 July 2001
That there would be more
a man and a light and a knife
brought home from Burma gore
still thick on it the wolves
are howling at my thought of it
right now in actual Annandale

because what we think
attracts the world. Attunes the world;
or otherwise inflects
the dialects of desire
and the special code of fear.

She is not close, this animal,
but close enough I know her voice
lifted through the katydids and little rain

a furlong off
a memory like mine, a mouth.

***

So I remember my childhood souvenir
— a Japanese knife from the Burma Road —
and a wolf howls. All wars are now.

***

I hear you weltering in twi-mind
like an assassinated harp

you sit on a gravestone beside me
talking about your father on the road to love

we are in the graveyard of the core.

8 July 2001
NAÏVE AMERICAN FANTASY BUILT INTO THE SKY

Erastus Salisbury Field (American, 1805-1900)
The Historical Monument of the American Republic

Is why. I love it. It is the kind of thing I dream about
And not just I.

And Field died
a week before my father’s birth so
he must have become my father.

Who drew imaginary horses. These are houses. These are all
I mean to understand my body with.

9 July 2001
THE WAVES

In memory of Marjorie Nicholson

that she comes into the room and sits down at the table
and is a certain age and wears a purple dress and reads
out loud in a strange mid-Atlantic voice the way a
deaconess of old Atlantis might have sounded at vespers

because all religions are one as the poet tells us
what are not one might then be the devotees the fanatics
and they must have had them too, fishy old poets
who chanted stories the echoes of which lingered

long enough for Spenser and such to write them down
so that we hear the ways of dragons and virgins
both those who are and those who seem and ocean
busy long ago with both kinds of lady all kinds of men

vanished under what in their language they called the muscles of the sea.

9 July 2001
a mercy room and rain
surround me
faint and soft and green

green rain sane room my sweat
has the sound of Mongol flutes
you know them
they snarl twin-
reeded by the Siegessäule
every day a victory but whose?

9 July 2001
Then something was going to say itself

a cluster of anxieties
around a poor old wall

and a wall’s a hard thing to be around

it’s so full of standing and going.
Shepherds cough in the itchy underbrush
hiding from their flocks. A quiet
smoke, a page or two of Rabelais
then back to work. Moi,
I have no other work but this,
sweeping shadows under Gothic steeples
coaxing clouds this way over sticky hills.

And I, I have no other work but you.

9 July 2001
SUMMER LOGIC

To be a manual of birds
to be early and a pond
almost imaginary in twelve feet of mist
everything is a road and you

2.
almost America almost a cloud
tattoo of a swallow on the horizon

3.
the wilderness between the body and the person
I pioneer —

this is science and a thing unknown
the balance the horizon
or how the feelings reach the world

or how I can reach you through your skin
seems the most prosperous magic if I can

voyage into the strange democracy of touch.

10 July 2001
A box with eyes
has to do somehow
with love

what is that
a gaze in the hands
a look you can open
I am telling you
you can hide
in my eyes

they have seen Kentucky when July simmered in the bottomlands
heat of old tobacco barns
I inhaled their emptiness

thinking to bring you
word of that wordless condition
where we know everything and can barely
reach out our hands

I wanted you to belong
to the way I see you
there
that is the confession

but I won’t tell you what my other eye can see.

10 July 2001
Being able to count
and the smell of wet cedar in the yard
and you being

in my house and you being my house
and the stars sometimes of course and the rain
and the shimmershiver of poor memory

these are my sacraments
we’ve been in every room of the house but one
to do something about that

the sealed book, the bible in Navaho.

11 July 2001
PILLOW TALK

— Answer my questions with
  a hat tossed on the crescent moon

— you don’t wear a hat

— and if I did it would be wood
  a wooden hat, how like you that?

— wooden hat on wooden head
  mildew soggy from a sopping heart

— but this heart invented you

— no
  all it did was eat away a wall
  it loves
  to see through
  and call what it sees a world

  then sees me in it, or as it,
  what good is that to me,
  this little acid notch you’ve worked,
  the heart is acid?

— how cruel the match is to the cigarette!

— and the changer to the subject

— oh

— there are no answers are there
  to what I ask
  or you have none?
— the breakwater in Dun Laoghaire harbor
  the clumsy amorists well flown in drink
  come down from Drumcondra
  to sprawl on the cannon meant for Napoleon
  something about the awkwardness of love,
  the sheer clumsiness of sex
  and yet a grace is there

— answer the question for Christ’s sweet sake

— auto ferry
  full of Belgians
  belligerent
  she was from Tenerife she danced

— maybe you’re right
  your heart is wooden

  you’re on your own tonight
  the moon’s in trouble.

11 July 2001
And had something to say to you
Something blue as Samarkand
Where it never rains but say I do

And we are kilns for one another
And no potter anywhere

Is that the couch,
The truth, the colors behind the eyelid
Hidden where the names can’t come?

Does one thing ever come from another
(we are furnaces for each other,
fornex and new bread, an arch
holding the aqueduct above the city
two thousand years

we are safe inside each other like an idea in a madman’s mind

always waiting for the animal of us
“if you were an animal with four feet…”
shying shying

the cause of terror is history

(I want the naïve permissions of a glory just newborn)

12 July 2001
LANDES

Are we near the gate yet
where the guide
goes?

   Everything gets smaller.
We fit in hard
to the merest
    now. If then.

Because one cared
another lingered
   isn’t it
as much as that, this Heideggerian
dwelling,

   this planet of it, this mistake.

And. And the word you won’t pronounce
shivers over the dry moorland
white-tailed kingbirds shimmer in and out of underbrush.

13 July 2001
A WORD NOT SAID

Barriers also, a wall across a street,
a word across the space between us
dangerous with restriction.

The definition.

Before this word was spoken
traffic could pass freely between the two hearts,
merchandise and musicians passed,
tradesmen and busy priests

and children, children.

So many of them free to idle, free to play.
Our life is a sleep they investigate,

to know what it feels like to be here in this person,
 or over there, you, what
it feels like to be you. They sleep into our hands,

they sleep into the way we look at each other
sitting across such a small room,
your hands sleeking along the surfaces of things,
pages, books, materials

they sleep into us until we are only who we are.
No expectations. Constantly interchanging,
ever know, never sure, always more, always more,
free to want and free to fear,
hard and soft, touch and tell.

But then the word comes pompous up the street
beating its empty drum until we can’t hear
anything we feel inside us move.

13 July 2001
ENGLISH COURSE

Way of laying bricks
so that they stay
locked in the structure they articulate

a wall a hinge
a cardinal on a maple tree

and its name too will have to be declared
in time, that endless dictionary.

Meantime a door is everywhere.

13 July 2001
THE OTHER WOMAN

What can they be saying or doing

The other woman
The person at the gate who is the gate
The person sitting on the rock who is the rock

Nobody can get past her

And she is there for everyone
Like a moon in a fairytale
Everybody is allowed to see

Not like us
Not like here
Not like a real moon

13 July 2001
The tree is on the telephone the tree
calls me every day and says its name
I hear its name among the crackle of the actual
static should mean standing still

the tree is trying to get me to do something
sing maybe or call somebody else on the phone
the tree wants me to do things for the world
it says the tree wants me to love you

but I want to love you for your sake
or for mine but the tree is adamant
keeps calling back and won’t leave a message
but I can tell the deep slur of its breathing

the tree is on the telephone again I answer
its says its name and I say mine then it breathes
a little and says your name I sigh and repeat it
it says for the world not you for the world not me

so I say something rude to the tree the way I do
when I’m not sure if you’re being you or I me
and the tree is quiet so long I think I’ll hang up
but it’s no use I know a tree always calls back

finally the tree speaks and says something
I can’t understand it at all but all at once
I am filled with a curious peace and say yes
then hang up and I have said yes to a tree.

14 July 2001
nothing should have a title

nothing should have a plan an outline
a mortal scheme

everything should come to light
dar a la luz means to give birth
everything should come to be known
au fur et a mesure they say
one thing after another

meaning forever

which is what it means when it says
I will love you forever

nothing will stop appearing nothing will linger
nothing will disappear

no more than a wave ever moves.

I am telling you the truth
there exists no future only what we do

14 July 2001

partir, c’est quitter la phrase