

No Roots Except In Air

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Try It Yourself

The dislocation
of the art of our century
is also visible
in poetry.

Minds are not less
but the Void
is nearer,
the blind reality.

Though the pain of being
can still be opposed
by form, truth,
beauty,

to speak with dead voices
is incomplete,
while our silence
deepens eternity.

The Silence, The Light

On the mountain
everyone is scared,
just as in the city,
the same Void opens
under fragile lives.

Work lasts, why cry
at what passes?
Affection, mutual
recognition – world lasts.

This is not an age
for grand gestures:
suspect
their intentions.

From the heights,
sierra or
skyscraper, feel
the silence, the light.

World Shore

Bitter beach where
civilization ends
but Nature's ceased
beginning.

Sand layers
tarred by destruction,
heart's erosion,
fouled detritus.

The poem of love
and beauty chokes
refusing
to be written.

Even our children
soured
by imitation
by false repetition.

This is the Tree

You are a flower
or a tiny star
in white, rose, green
seen from the Void.

This is the sky.
This is the earth.
Between them,
sit and carve a purpose.

You are the stem-tip,
changing in sun,
mist, rain,
flame in the air's shift.

This is the tree.
This is the breeze.
between them
confused, we turn.

Darkling Sands

The old, long breakers,
the end of the island.
I fail to sleep, I
count the shadows.

Moon grasps emptiness
in well-holes of cloud.
Insomnia plucks
its ancient lyre.

There are no more
empty shores, or
easy wastelands,
comfortable Voids.

The old winds
at the headland's edge,
own the new,
the deeper roar.

We Make

I kiss you, we make form.
The leaves grow, they make form.
Space is not void but form.
Speak to me: that is form.

Memory's wound is form,
the bed and the sea are form.
Landscape shudders with form,
our lives are unburied form.

The game against death is form,
the harbour, its piles are form.
Inside you, beside you, form.
The tongue, the artery, form.

Be Clear

Light is also salvation
but not in any
form of religion.
Organised illusion
is still illusion,
but the light
on the hill
brings salvation.

If you dispense with 'truths'
and begin again,
with Earth and the human,
you arrive at what we made
what made us,
intention-less
in Nature's light.

Light is redemption,
but not in any
kind of religion.
The silence is silence,
despite your meditation,
metaphysics, endemic confusion,
the light from endless space
is redemption,

mind's salvation.

Seeing, Choosing

A priestess of Brauron on a wedge of stone,
beauty passed down to us in the bone,
or mind's infinity, just as desired,
soothes our ire, venom, spleen,
distrust of the mean, the vile, political.
The soul is in itself critical.
It chooses, this sensitive spirit,
delicate things, pictures, frail rings,
words, forms, memories,
acts of impossible fidelity.
We are the seers of beauty
(It seems) for this reality.

Nightfall

Be calm my heart,
night is falling.
Consider eternity,
night is falling.

An eye, a shoulder,
night is falling.
Island of secrets,
night is falling.

Bitter the knowing,
night is falling,
bewitched of feelings,
night is falling.

Tired the kisses, night
is falling.
Silence, spirit,
night is falling.

Inwards

There are no perfumed islands free of pain,
there are no scented fields of paradise.
Where we are is where we shall remain,
whether we stay or sail towards the light.

The world though opens in a thousand flowers,
our minds (no souls exist) are free to be.
Where we are is the boundary of space,
the inner form is our humanity.

The Death of all Religions

We will not fear the centre of our being,
true, sensitive and kind is our achievement.

In human hearts, and not in any temple,
is all of our reality and knowledge.

Religion holds no ownership of spirit,
the soul-less, god-less, world without intent,

is still as open to the mind and heart,
its love, and truth, and beauty still exist.

Smoke

Bluish smoke from the fresh campfire,
fragrance of cones, cut-wood, trees
for a hundred miles,
and mountains no man owns.

World, the un-possessed,
slips from us, Horace says.
This Latin text wiser
than critics, metaphysics.

Blue smoke, white, the fierce
blaze of timber at the core,
red fire that warms the spirit,
beyond the word, the law.

No Power

The truth is the truth of the mind
is no longer public.

Inwardly there is no hierarchy,
every spiritual niche is valid.

Outwardly power simply
inheres in the process, beyond our control.

Outwardly wealth, force, notoriety
are vessels without validity.

The truth is the truth of the mind
is private now, of the spirit.

The false gods and priests,
their voices, have no power.

The Question

The space of my necessary intensity
includes you, is it right love
that your space
should include me?

When love alone despite its greatness
depth, is not enough,
when we torment each other
without so wishing?

I burn in eternity's mind-space
for you, is it right love
that you
should burn with me?

Baudelaire

The plaint of beauty
with the breath of charm.

The life not the reason for the verse,
the verse the flower of the life.

Exiled, ah, fallen from the sky,
seeing the eternity of earth, no paradise.

Beyond religion, clinging to the incense
of religion, no deist-Satanist, but moralist.

Electrometer of our pain, tremor
of our distress, idealist-realist.

A flare of light, then dark...a flare
against indifference.

Fountain of energy,
falling in the night!

Perfect Citizens

Who feel no disgust at humanity *en masse*,
who find religious fantasies consoling.

Who celebrate the rich and famous as they pass,
find charity an answer to the spirit's keening.

Who love earth's creatures farmed, and destroyed,
though embarrassed by intensity's excess.

Who consider life as something designed and not absurd,
who believe in all the rituals of progress.

Trees

The trees owe nothing to the stars.
Their darkness shines beyond the night,
to softly populate the light,
Earth's Venus, Jupiter, and Mars.

Some

Those whose pleasure leaves an aftertaste,
those whose joy's anxiety ungraspable,
those who try to show the moment's pace,
those better suited to sobriety,
work, immersion in indifferent Nature,
not humanity, those possessed,
driven by intensity, who stare
too closely at reality, gazed at
curiously by the rest.

Solid Stonework

Tired of world and time
I read the Chinese.
Life flowers in
solidity of seeing.
Words can seem solid too
but not like that.

I love the intention-less,
Nature's indifference,
non-hostile, undemanding,
except of our attention,
a purity of motive and desire.

A wall, an interface, of rock
cleft by tight roots,
half a mountain glitters in the sun
each fold and twist
is stony universe.

And so we find
as we grow older
the space seems larger
we must consider.
Words can seem solid too,
but not like that.

Love Song

Everything is there in our hearts, sister, sister,
the far reaches of tenderness, child, my child,
beauty of silences, and of caresses, lover, lover,
pulsing of mind's empathies, friend, my friend.

Everything is there in our hearts, lover, lover,
marvellous spaces filled with light, friend, my friend,
where we shall always be together, sister, sister,
in spirit's unwavering stillness, child, my child.

Outlier

A trembling moon, a well of fire,
navigates poplars, clouds, hills,
illuminates the single stem,
the leaf of grass, the white stone,
everything humble, everything real.

Oh, I understand the unreality
we make to live inside,
our alien-human,
but this is moonlight
flooding over hands,

a blade of peace
and mind's last outpost,
before the Milky Way
the galaxies, the deep field,
the outer veils of time,

a trembling moon of fire,
the outlier.

Ice/Fire

Your body cold as ice,
your eye in mine eye,
cloud on the hills,
mind among the trees.

This place is penetrated
by the air, set on a verge
of heart and mountain,
a place believed-in.

My hand on your womb,
silent, tender, walls are thin,
this house is fragile,
opening on the stars.

Your lips as cold as ice,
and mine in thine.

We'll close the door again,
we'll build our fire.

Cosmological Constant

Gradually, as the galaxies separate further,
(The universe expanding, Void grows greater)
Earth will float, by its star, a blue flower,
lonelier, its teardrop of reflected light,
still fiercely bright, no clearer.

Slowly the heart subsides, grows cooler, stiller,
(Mind voyaging, the silence grows deeper)
and, by its memory, beats, blue wave,
with the pulse of ever, vessel of time
still dark with night, its fires.

On Snowy Hills

This is beauty,
snow on the hills,
bent-pine, smoke trails,
no way over the pass.
Sky's ephemeral blue's
the vague centre, skein of light.

Pine-smoke at dawn
in glittering mist,
what mind sees
of air and rock,
shattered reality,
this is beauty.

Kick off the snow,
trudge downhill,
stilled saws, old trunks
of levelled timber,
the years of growth undone,
the ache of seeing.

This is beauty.

Infinite Room

No roots except in air.
Can I base the self
on a silence of silver,
a mist-like wake in the light,
on seconds like centuries,
the galaxies crowding
to spill their veil-thin milk-glow
on stone's bare-shouldered gleam?

You I can hold in the shadow
make you a flame of the air,
a shiver of tree-night, horizoned,
you in whom there is
infinite room,
universe, world's eyes that search
for you present, you there
un-rooted except in air.

No Idea Dies

In and out of the tangle
of the world's slippery presence,
Minds, we emerge
from the womb's
beaten blossom,
torn vulva, sent into the empty
silence of all being,
universal dark and flow.

Daughters out of daughters,
of daughters, from the caves,
and sons, the cul-de-sacs,
all part of the dance,
Mind that delights
in freedom from circumstance.
Mind to mind we kiss,
thoughts to thought connect,
no idea dies.

Blessed

We are blessed by insentience,
blessed by inanimate things.
All of equal validity, we assess.
Creativity, or destructiveness,
nothing external judges, we are blessed.

Out of us the morality.
We are blessed
by root, leaf, cloud, stone,
tree, intention-less.
Beleaguered mind,

they soothe and calm,
all creatures in the light,
torn between silence here
and consciousness.
Creating, we are blessed.

Mountain Trails

While states enact,
fill time, consume,
moonlight rakes
the mountain's silent lines,
the whispering rain.

There is a state of mind,
soft as the planet,
waits for stillness,
waiting for the void,
while mountain stands

in cloud and snow,
forest laid wide open.
Such you know when
you find it.
No roots except in air.

Mind-Meeting

As we understand the power of minds meeting,
there must be a frustration with the body.
Empathy must overcome the pain, ennui,
the mechanism's sadness and the flesh.

Million to relate to, ah yes, but when you know
the beauty of minds meeting there must be
irritation with the world where vacant forms
jostle, without awareness, in the crowd.

It is not that we are greater, wiser than others,
only that we are as we are, must be,
frustrated forever here with matter,
when we understand how minds meet.

Your Heart

How valuable your heart,
so calm the night,
so soft the roar of sea,
the fading light.

How valuable your heart,
a path that walks
across a wake of stars,
so strong your art,

that in its simplest part
defeats my own,
so still the night, ah, pale the flow,
towards your living heart.

Winter-mouth

The winter-mouth
has a touch of silence,
this is the way it flares
lips, blindingly
with the rage of time
beyond shadows.

Its speech is the
alien tribe's tongue,
the heart-heavy
whiteness of days,
mercy's fall,
the birth-foam's tall jet.

And its palate
tastes us mortal,
blind of all meaning,
white as the poplars'
crushed sense
of a blood-wet exile.

Remembrance

Black-waved remembrance
night-born heart's-bed
star, swims
towards me,
bears lamp light,
white gaze,
glance of its farness.

The black candle spent
flames in anguish,
how the beloved
lances from centres
of fire, disrupts
the wax of parting,
collapses the soul.

Amelanchier, Pieris, Osmanthus

At twilight,
white snow-blossoms,
break here, sprays and olive wings,
and there, dull-cream cascades
from spears of sharp thick darkness,
but quietest, strangest
are the tiny stars
on pale grey-green,
ice lights, on leaves made globes,
clustering constellations,
(Cygnus, Lyra,
Han River flows east)
drops from the painter's brush,
bits of time,
fractured twilight.

Aware

Shock of life,
articulated insect
climbs Japanese leaf,
is a leaf, strange,

Words are ours,
but this is real,
nothing you made,
nothing I understand.

Unaware, they say,
life though, better,
and we, though grand,
life startles.

Over my hand
climbs mountains,
a multi-limbed Dante
my hell its purgatory.

Species? Like us,
no mind, no name,
climbers,
shocks of life.

Craving

The urgency to make,
now let that go,
let music of meaning
sink into silence.

Licks of fire
scale the driftwood,
but you are not thinking –
peace, giving.

Between self
and the infinite
stretches the thinnest
of membranes.

The grasping, the desire,
only,
observing space,
let it go.

Carriers

Not to accept the conclusion
is our integrity.

To be carriers of light, now,
into the void.

The mountain shifts
imperceptibly, slowly,

and packed in our moment
is all this flow.

Relationship is hardest,
do you see,

between us and beyond us,
self, eternity.

To still the heart,
to pass between these hearts.

Not to accept,
to maintain integrity.

The Light

Who in the light,
appreciates the light?

Who in the dark
frees themselves from darkness?

Between the two
the real work is thought,

though we still have to toil
with things of hands, to be able to begin it.

I would say eternity was there for the taking
if the essence were not in releasing.

Who in the light
understands the light?

The Journey

Odysseus carves through the black salt seas,
considering islands, contemplating Circe,
in magic juggling with uncertainties.
He dreams the dark groves of Persephone.

There, the dead must walk, not quite substantial,
between trees hung with ribbon, pools of light.
Reflecting shadows deeper than a funeral,
the spirits of the underworld are bright.

Other shores of foam break, other skies,
swallow-footed Sirens, fruits that maze,
doubt's whirlpool: opposite the cave of lies,
Charybdis looms, through the dawning haze.

Blue, Luminous

Tonight the sky, dark-luminous turns,
Earth is floating in the blue abyss,
but here all things are bright,
all the harbour light,
where mind and spirit pure
heart-heavy true azure
reflect the glowing centuries
long-lost wars, veil-less mysteries.

Mind we are, inside this tiny space,
time-voyagers, drifting in this place,
but transparent trees, the hills, are light,
here for a moment, floating in the night,
where we have lived before,
creatures of fragile law,
among the dead antiquities,
among human iniquities.

The Age

Swear no allegiance,
the times are unpropitious.
The flute, the dumb glance
echo worlds beyond us.

Bow to nothing, mock all powers,
watch the Achaeans come, the Romans go.
The mind's dawn light's a colder flow,
the night increases, the times are ours.

Earth's still earth: stones under our feet.
Pay no dues, avoid the market-squares.
Keep the painter's hand, the artist's moves,
Pythagoras: mark sand in the open street.

Swear no allegiance, the times are unpropitious.
Let the blue fox shine: the dolphin glistens,
notes compel the air, and dark soil listens.
Bow to nothing: cherish what's beyond us.

Deer Walk Through at Night

Through the transparent alleyways
of the dark kingdom. Feet
on threads of bark, sand, twigs,
the grey girl returns from the depths.

Dream, bird-calls, chatter of passage,
then the word opening, clarifying,
do you know it? Language, bright
salient, luminous, brine-filled, bitter.

Fruit in her teeth, seeds, pine-glow,
blood-dark, the strange garden,
what has been seen, where
it has been, is not forgotten.

Grains lodged in the mind,
and heart. A dark walking.
Deer pass through at night.
This is our planet.

In the Flames

Children run through the sun
at street-corners, those are the
early-dead. Broken glass, cans,
and the rubble of un-creation.

Children sold at the crossways,
ghost-shadows, here, quiver,
the innocent-maimed
the detritus of un-civilisation.

Children play games with the fractured
pieces of adult worlds,
fallen through the sieve of meaning,
they give them their names.

Children mimic life, space,
stand on infinity, crawl
the surface of futures, fragile as insects,
footed, winged, straying here, alight.

Mind-Zen

Is shooting a shaft right through
the stone, without thinking.

Bending the bow of un-thought,
in no mind, then, release it.

In the air it moved, how?
Did it move in seeing?

Nothing passed through the rock,
no electron pierced the holes.

Sudden the dancing feathers,
the heron's wings over water.

Loosed like light, flung like thought,
fired straight through the mind.

Performing Art

Let the performance impress,
the dancer flow as the dance.
The rose is intention-less,
beauty's in circumstance.

Do it for us: create, move, flower,
only for us, once, then never,
be the way meaning towers,
winds unfurl, petals quiver.

Only the Earth, nothing less,
the poem's leaf-fall in the night,
where you are where you are forever,
though days seem heavy, they are light.

Translate

Images translate from tongue to tongue,
music harder, chime of different bells,
as tone is cast of mind, scent of thought,
what hue stains the mouth eating berries,
particular soft shadings through the leaves,
in a garden filled with silent shadows,
and the unique bird, the hidden voice
singing in the night from ten till two,
one imitative of a dozen others.
Images are sweet, and the tradition.
All poets share a common tongue.

Obvious

Speaking the obvious, a Ch'an 'master'
makes the simple difficult to see,
like the presence of a tree in starlight,
obvious, and then too obvious.

Chasing it is a sign of craving,
unhelpful as following 'the master',
not how the master became master,
something he never desired to be.

It's obvious the obvious is not easy.
Speaking, seeing, feeling, that's a gift.

Falls

Over the falls
like snow
petals slide
on the stream.

The grey-branch
flows white-fire,
mind layers
of glassy leaves.

So we as we fade.
Go there,
be right,
purify the heart.

The Force

The force of time
makes us forget,
the tallest tree
points at the stars,
a finger post in time,
we pass.

Yet time is free
and form connects
through past
and future minds'
and world's
configurations.

I brush your lips,
I hold your face
between my hands
a clearer pool
a greener force
of time.

Reality is Local

All distant power
puts nothing in our hands,
yet sharing
speaks through distance.

Mind calls to mind
though nothing's in our hands.
Beyond all power
is trust and understanding.

To break the power of distance,
fill our hands,
is our first step,
lose power and never grant it,

least of all to those who seek it.
Power is nothing,
all our sharing,
all our empathy is in our hands.

Deeper than the Root

If the universal core is randomness,
something we will never fathom,
since our life is all effect,
since our meaning posits cause,
then randomness must be the heart
of the deeper stillness, its potential.

If the endless forms of the world,
are always subject to the formless,
something we will never fathom,
since our life is form and purpose,
the formless is endlessly an aspect
of the deeper silence, its potential.

Energies, deeper than the root.

Field-Mouse

Its small brown whiskered face
pokes silent from a hole
between old paving stones
observes, is free, considers me,
who put out food to reach
to creature and be warmed
by slight relationship.

The small brown long-tailed form
runs between light and shadow,
appears, retreats, pursues
an inner urge, we converge
on intention-less truth,
are fine, find grace,
have purpose in the sun.

Arrows

Of all things the heaviest
were made light, were conquered.

In the ashes of the fire
my tribe found a meaning in the eye,

their place in mind, arrows flying
into final spaces beyond here.

All things precious were destroyed,
no thought was destroyed,

no emotion, all intensified,
the barb within the eye,

the heart within the tongue.

Ilium Re-visited

Barriers made of blood, tall as fire,
Troy-defeating flames, lift
between us, love is
between us.

Who said time dies, walls break:
nothing dies, the black sun slides
out of the skies
between us.

We wade through silences, bitter
as fire, we flog the horse of wood
with memory's wire:
it looms above us.

Signs of Eternity

The emblems of eternity
are mindless stars,
the protons, neutrons
in us, there, forever.

No one went to this
making, why does that
trouble you with fear?
Those infinite spaces

have no design on us.
Be serious, un-fearing,
our sweet transience
is painful, but a blessing.

Signs of eternity
clouds, lights, worlds,
ephemeral, changing,
something there, forever.

Refined

Green leaves thrust
through the snow:
'Through what should
kill us, slow.'

Ice on the silent lips
ice on a bitter stair,
but shadow dances still,
the poem is there.

Light from the black cloud,
striking its fire from stone,
but a rain-filled stream
spreads the silt below.

Green leaves on the lips,
light-less sight for the blind
we see what thought creates,
we are by pain refined.

Nine Paintings of Paul Klee

1.

Flower-Myth

On a red ground this bird flies between moons.
Trees on its precipices are also firs by pools.

The background is a woman, the leaves are leaves,
but open, pointing to eternally-lit spaces

in the interior of any planet, mind, eye.
A sideways mountain stretches to mouth-arc,

bitter lips carve through the flesh. The bird
flies back to the egg, fertile moons sing

of health, forgiveness, the bird is a plane,
the moon-trees are sperm, something is coded,

triangles potent, curves sing, see this is cut
from the ground of words, they creep

beneath borders, over the silver sand,
this is the tapestry of flesh, there are white

stitches in the fabric of a one-winged age.
The egg is offered, the leaves of the tree.

There are margins, entrances, hills, shores.

2.

‘But still not close enough’

Cogs and keys. On a grey ground
they go running, the shapes of our fears,
objects with legs and with meaning,
they are the names of our intensity.
The drummer beats out red on the canvas
of time. Oh elsewhere, blues and greens
are there, the lines that grasp at the heart,
spheres are there with eyes, our humanity,
and beyond all, colour and touch, the sense
of something, amazed, wholly individual,
there are golden fish, there’s the Prince
of the Underworld, musings of the musician,
and the helmeted self with the barbed lance
who calls to monsters to surface, out of
the deep, shadow-squares, light-bringer!
Ah but here there is red, here there is grey.

3.

Beyond You

Where does it come from?
Out of the Mind.
How does it get there?
Out of the World.
There are signs pointing
but the way is not
where we thought,
forces appear from clouds
and trees, and go past you.

The puppets, the faces,
the heads, where do they
come from? Out of
the Mind. How do they
get there? Out of
the World. But the eyes,
the tongue, the heart
are not what you expected.
They go beyond.

4.

Cool of life.

The mountain is echoed by blue,
sky and tree, columns of air
are columns of time, moments
of time, one moment of time.

Symbols flicker over the ground
of mind, eyes, starbursts, hands, arrows,
in every direction, smoke from a roof,
the king of darkness is once more ordering blue.

Blue churns, and something emerges
a red road, green lettering, white towers,
a kind of sun, and vegetable stirrings
point at black. In the centre, blue.

5.

Crossing.

The water is blue
flecked with white
but the boat is black.

Over a blue wave
the oar circles,
the oar too is black.

There is a shore
with a jetty, a wharf,
the timbers are black.

The water is blue,
pale and pure,
but the boat is black.

6.

Machine.

Fragile the handle
that turns our hearts
in the immense
silence, blue-green.

The vanes of thought
on a dead wind
rock to and fro
enchanted by
gold, and a little red.

The tongued heads
chant, puppet-like,
from the isle
of women,
bird-claws cling.

The mechanism
so delicate
turning us over,
lifting us skywards,
no one turns.

7.

The Hosts of Fragility.

An eye is stitched
to a mouth.
The ladder (of tears)
is pinned
to a frame
of perspectives.

The sea is grey.
The sky is grey.
The tower is white.
Notes, springs, wire
coils, tenuous fine
between strands, lines.

A foot, a head,
a hand, a heart,
are stitched together.
The hosts of fragility
walk, a thousand
feet above us.

8.

Coded.

The objects, do they smile at us?
The circle's symbols, keys, twigs,
forks, combs, in which we find
faces, forms (human), trees, ankhs?

They smile, they become wells,
trunks, mouths, sexes, not mocking
sharing foolish existence,
the strangeness of being a construct.

They smile, we also reach down
to protons, gluons, quarks,
fingers slip into the glove
into veils of what equations,

symbols, coded, keys, twigs, forks,
combs, where we find forces, forms, ankhs.

9.

Theatre.

The cleverest art, most childlike
art, is the art of the rainbow,
the art of the puppet theatre,
face stuffed with sun and stars,
the cleft of the brow,
the breasts of the heart,
the triangle, lower, of fate.

The simplest art, the profoundest
art, is the art of the rainbow,
the creatures, those dolls,
the flowers of cloth and felt,
the fish of the feet,
the grid of the chair,
the stair and the curtain.

We go there together,
in colour return,
in white of desire
and purity's red,
in gold of arrival,
in emerald ending.

Water-Gazing

Looking into deep water,
to what churns, slower,
slower, till eye goes on
through stillness, same
action, variant change,
motion round a centre.

In the ink the fisherman
by the rock, rod idling, feet
in the stream, face hidden,
spine relaxed, views water,
stone, eyes the flow of form,
all that's pouring from the Tao.

The Ideal

The beetle's pincers lift
a world, its arms push
clear through grass. Each
coarse stem an infinite
rod of this universe, it
holds up time, under
which all beetles crawl.

Undaunted, pure, this
armoured knight crashes
through undergrowth
and thorn, one arm a sword,
the other a knife, blunders,
toils towards its destiny,
the green, unseen eternity.

Departure

You must go, for a long time,
before you find value,
I must lose you forever
for you to know me.

The leaves we have opened
must settle on water,
cast a brave shadow,
be sunlit in silence.

You must go, far off,
to come to your homeland.
I must send you to mercy
before you can find me.

The face that shines,
eternity struck there,
must extinguish all things,
before things exist.

It

Again and again from the living eye,
it sang, it sang, in the depths of the fire,
now beyond midnight's shivering spire,
it rises up in the dark blue sky.

Softly out of the dead of night,
once more dear than love of the heart,
now washed azure by evening's art,
blown through air in a gust of light.

We were

Our line became truer
nearer the heart of creation.
Breathed through eyes
turned dumb, love
gave itself a name.

There was written,
a star on a leaf,
night's opinion,
time's ruling, ash
on our mute hands.

Out of grey night,
the line floated
in heavy meadows
of spring stone,
held off autumn fires.

Eyes, arms we were hands,
sepals we were flowers,
words and windows broke
fell like the doves
in heart-pieces.

Why we meet here

For something deeper than world,
you come here, why I came here,
for what troubles, all our anxieties,
for the walking on transience.

For that feeling, not time or space,
you are here, why I stay here,
for the what we cannot grasp
for what we must live through.

For knowledge of what cannot
be knowledge, why we speak here,
listen, through symbols made
of light, for mind unseen by mind.

The Hero

Foreseen: the flesh
scarred by sand,
the first fierce
tug of the horses.

Hands on helmet,
breastplate, spear
already translucent
vague as ancestors.

To be without hope
the gravest destiny,
no cities to found,
no magical consort.

Dust tiring the mouth,
eyes in silence now,
the departure terrifies
nostrils quiver with foam,

ice, and the wheels turn,
and the walls wooden,
and splintered, lucent,
ah, and shuddering.

Feels grit under the teeth,
the flame in the eyes,
a meaningless future name
echoed by centuries.

Simple

The light on the leaf
oh you can't explain
that organic feel,
Leonardo's line,
how mind drops
feet first through
space and finds
meat of the object
whatever leaf is,
an open mystery,
Mozart's phrase,
light on the leaf,
not how it's done,
natural intricacy,
must be easy,
simple, there
it goes, light
leaf, note, line,
grace of being.

Your Name

In the silence below the leaves
I breathed the light of recalcitrant stars,
the barriers of fate, the heaps
of ash that we call Then.

‘How can tenderness be weight?’
I thought, not understanding,
‘How can love be harsh,
the galaxies shine in the night?’

Durance of beauty, rock of distance,
even to think your name is fire.
What is left is the reed that roots,
the poplar, still, under the mountain.

Earth and the rose are stardust both,
lightest of flames, and heavy burning,
turned dark, solid, a fertile nurturing,
seeding memory’s stones through time.

Fields

Black earth hand labours over,
cool out of dark sub-structure,
where silvered roots gleam,
from the eye, the stream
of ebony, darkness, clings,
until it uncurls, becomes,
sillion, silence, leaved.

The past lives on in furrows.
Fields of presence, urns of clay
uncover the mortal kingdoms.
How, from this soil, display,
Muse singing, women gathering?
You must plunge your spirit into
what shows under the blade.

Masks

From the outside where's the mind?
The extra-ordinary lives inside
the sacs of flesh, mirrors of eyes

From animal utterance who can hear
the creature's dumb inward voice,
rivers of pain, and plains of feeling?

How did the face create the poem?
Mind travels places on other faces,
camps, eats, beyond this common place.

From hidden body and time's illusions
comes the thin rill that feeds the flow,
another visage, and deeper than this.

Shoreline

Separation where silence deepens,
watch the creature pulled from the rock
thrash in a cloud of sand and ink,
subside by suckers, foot by foot.

Separation's where ache goes on,
asks the question, fails an answer,
speaks its lines, without reply,
on stages empty of light-fall, footfall.

Separation's island, there are others,
archipelagos, sunlit, idle,
ship-less, smoking, glassy hillsides,
where trees wave and silence deepens.

Simpler

Making the complex life simpler,
becoming leaves, stones,
forgetting roadways,
becoming bird's far cry
or the rose.

There is no truth
in all those faiths,
reality is much simpler,
though it's not of our
energies or our greatness.

It's name and silence,
beyond and here,
the hush of ice, and star,
and rain, soaking the earth
the tension unresolved.

Surprised

Your silence has no meaning
or a meaning I don't wish to hear.
Your silence is denial of what was
value to me, you, who knows what?

Your silence is pain, baffled spirit,
thwarted mind-hurt, no redemption.
Your silence has no meaning, truth
has bled away, doors closed once open.

Your silence speaks, more loud the phrases
than love declared or beauty altered.
Your silence surprised the mind, still
giving, heart, lips, hands, ears burning.

Entangled

We drown in the world's vast energies.
How small we are on the heart-slopes here!
Slighter even than leaves or flowers,
they return in eternal innocence:
we will sink with the weight of stars.

Things seek to be without consciousness,
while we are lost in the thoughts of self,
reader-less pages turned underground,
they, things grown towards the light,
we, loving stones, stars, rains that fell.

Annihilated by world, and smothered,
the wounded snake, the grounded fly,
return in perpetual innocence,
they are forever the products of sense,
while we drown deep in the tangled sky.

The New Voices

These are the makers,
the new voices,
the heron's breast-bone
bright in the sky.

Stars in the grass,
alder, rowan,
the white flower
of the watching eye.

Rooks, crows
on the winds of evening,
these the makers,
their forms on high.

Planters

Those trees we planted
show in midnight silence,
apple, pear, poplar
that shroud the stars.

Deeper we plant now,
deeper we follow,
these roots, the heart-roots
of the spirit.

Sunlight

Butterflies loosed through the sunlit world,
only fly summers, autumn's their winter,
but you, your spirit, the houses of light,
are beauty, are truth, woman of dream.

Dragonflies skim on the sunlit pools,
only glitter through warmth of evening,
blue-green mica followed by stars,
but you, your glitter, their pole of fire,

are silence, and grace, woman of dream.

On the Edge

Half a day reading history
until the shadowy dead
have presence,
by such small things
captured and remembered.

Fine detail makes us live,
generic creatures
a movement
or a gesture resurrects,
a window-face watching winter fields.

Events are, by their nature,
meaningless, the fire's
a fire within, Coleridge saw,
world turns on our fulcrum,
great on small, and earth on a knife-edge.

Love Conquers

Love conquers and the heart is ravaged.
A sweetness fills us, there is no resistance.
What pours from us is ours, within, reversing,
the gifts we're given, barely understood.

Rain then Stars

Rain down the glass,
streets float through air,
I touch your neck, we converse,
see later how the new moon lies
down banks of cloud, how stars
and planets shift, a music heard,
we laugh, the echo of a voice,
calls through our night, our
whispers soft, of place,
of bodies' gentleness,
and long acquaintance,
rain down the glass,
through open dark,
and quasi-eternal fires.

Cloud thoughts

Mountains of white cloud,
but we too free to go.

Impossible to see what is
this stream of water moving.

New shoots, fresh ground,
all the trees bow down.

Our song is here and gone,
but, then, the echo stays.

Who sold the forests?
Who felled the creatures?

Roots, there are no roots,
we plant them here.

Dark light, pale earth,
through the blackbird's eye.

The child, you, the mother
and the child.

Quality, they matter
the tall white hills of mind.

Hardest of all, the letting go,
Rilke, hardest to bless, let go.

There are still those who care
for consistency, for foundations.

All alive, every slope, new leaves
ancient light, grass cool at dawn.

Grass cools at evening, clouds,
every slope, every eye, all living.

A Text

A text is not a life.
No word's a thing,
but process pointing
into what is hidden.

Still Nature is a language
which we read, a text
where bright things move,
if time is verb, if space is object.

Past and future here within the text,
encoded, the moment is the word,
and what is dumb in us
the dark tremor of the creature,

now freed, now part of speech,
a sentence in the primer of the world.
We become the word,
yet life is not a text.

Forever

We will go naked through the centuries.
Civilisation is the cloth we wear,
but beneath the flesh the mind is bare,
ravaging naked through the centuries.

In You

Your hand by moonlight,
delicate as an eyelid,
touches that silken web,
that silvered thread,
tensile as steel, my love,
my faith in you.

Swallow

Emotion clouds your mind,
and all your thoughts are lost.
Phaedra follows her sister
into the heart of the maze.

There the lost bird beats
blind along alleys,
falling through the shadows,
on broken wings.

Here an axe stands, there a shield,
the half-hero shudders monstrously,
but you are overcome by intricacy,
and baffled by hidden voices.

You have no way to speak
from all your shining faces,
Pasiphae, Phaedra, Ariadne,
Woman, girl, child, bird's tongue.

The Call (A Photograph)

Those shafts of light are white
among the trees, they move
towards us,
are us, are our love,
mine for you, yours for me.

The forest is black,
the bell of light,
white fire, chimes in the dark,
nothing here is shattered,
the crystal shimmers.

The voice of time, our time,
is light. Cry of the Now.
This word alive, those trees,
fern, grass, seeds, flow
from ancient silence.

There is a distance
and then light unfolds,
there is connection.
The shafts of light
call towards us, call.

At Night

By night
the mountain-canyons,
the uncut, darkened
forests of Oregon,
the far north-west's
volcanic call,
the ocean winds,
the creatures breathing,
lights of Algol, Deneb.

Under the planet's weight
you lie, naked to stars,
my words extend
their fingered blindness
to tides, plains, rivers,
the great sigh
of grasses and seas,
from island here to far fall
to find you.

Wind-gleams among
leaves
lips where you dream
all the Pacific murmur,
the sweet cries
in the mouth of dawn,
cedar, fir,
the ancient trails of light,
all seeking, meeting.

Closer

Following the threads
of sweet association,
until richness deepens
corners of light and shadow,
old walls, old trees, new grass,
time swift or with
impossible slowness,
you, Nature, together
loved, in eternity.

No way to explain
what moves the heart,
the manifold connects,
all those landscapes,
and all those terrains
of your body and mind
deeper than I can bring
to the making,
closer to creation.

We hold what we love,
nothing escapes us,
fierce as reality, fiercer,
seen from beyond,
seen from within,
till both are either,
nothing is left behind,
you have me, still,
I have you.

Wake

Heron glides slowly over the lake,
after the rain has gone, water on
water, after the hiss of light.

Heron cries, monkey-screech
then, silent-waked, glides the trees
a grey sail of beauty, after the rain.

Heron sends strings of cries, kites
of sound, beats silent down
the lake, is gone, out of settling light.

Seasons

Mind is not at the mercy of seasons,
places of light are not surrendered,
by mountain-cloud, or planet's motion,
Mind is not sold, thoughts re-ignite,
silent, we are still all.

Out of mind flows compassion,
sacrifice for the true, the loyal,
the flame un-flickering, quiet the pure eye,
limpid love comes, gathering, quickening,
Mind is not at the mercy of seasons.

Mind-Water

Water slows in the eye's focus.
Water fills the hollows, then flows,
Water of storm's edge, of sea's maw.
Wave of the mountain, a hundred
thousand, ten million years, falling.
Crest of the forest curves and breaks.

Water bright at the cliff-edge, green
in shallows. Water stuns our hearing,
covers the hand, the groping fingers,
blinds the senses, lifts the wreckage,
Water that fills the hollows of hills,
till they drink, we drink.

Primitives

Ghosts? Masks?
Into subtle stillness
of places, things
behind the mind.

Ghosts, dance on a hill
of cloud, we see the rain
and thunder, pine on pine,
above the mountain.

Potent the symbols, mad
the ritual –
with what does not exist
can be no connection.

Until the next turn of the earth,
crazed dancing,
takes us no further,
leaves us facing things.

What the heart paints,
what the mind dances,
no one can make myths,
past, past, not this again.

That Purity

The purity at the heart of things.

Who denounce their past
deny their future, but to live
in the past is death.

All things always new:
free of memory or affection,
but, with no adverse intent,
rain falls, the glacier flows,
light opens again at dawn
like a flower.

Purity at the heart of things.

Is There

No mind, no names, no things.
Smoke in the air on a thousand peaks.
You think you understand this world?
No one understands this world.

Alba

(‘Infinite things desired, lofty visions’)

I found you among noble things,
I knew you among true spaces,
you come bringing the world’s depths,
hold in your hands the mind’s future.

You were not meant for dull being,
and I long to sweep away,
all this time, and all this silence,
find you again among noble things.

World-Bed

Deep in me,
you died deep into me,
boulder, the world-bed,
strata where we lie, lie.

To be layered of dark,
to be entrances, exits,
stones that hum,
trunks that tremble.

Smoke-scapes passing deep
in the floor of you,
over and over us gold centuries,
the aeon-lights.

Even now, still alive,
even now black air writes,
the now-infinite moment,
the all-we-brighten.

Sent out, gathered now,
into the days
over-seen by exiled star-fire,
we flare.

The uncountable names,
one vision, one
indecipherable hour,
morning, evening, dawn.

Of this we drink
our life, drink our death,
are, in a moment,
true.

The Proper Subject

The proper subject
of poetry, is time,
the frail, tender, mortal flesh,
its mind, care, grasp, satiation,
and what from time
we salvage here,
of truth, trust, beauty.

Modernity

Is the meaning inside, and those temples abandoned.

Is the wisdom of knowledge, and no blind discipline.

Is the nurture of spirit whereby the machine serves life.

Is to create the free, and to give beyond power and state.

Is the middle way of mind, thought balanced with feeling.

Is justice in the heart, tenderness there, grandeur of care.

Is the end of superstition, is meaning forever.

The Fore-Runners

Theirs the subtler music, the clearer light,
ours the beauty of darkness, gleam of night.

Theirs the dust of years that clings to the stem,
ours the strength of eye, the power to know them.

The Triad

Beauty becomes the mind's delight,
all delight must end in beauty.
Love is sweet as mind's delight,
all that delights we love.

And truth that delights the mind
is beautiful to us, is loved,
the three then are interwoven,
in delight, in man and woman,

truth, love and beauty here
the triad of delight.

No Formula

The truth of the world is more than its equations,
A is a woman, B a child, C is in truth a man,
X is hatred, Y a thought, Z their combination,
the fire, the light are more than the equation,
what is, is forever beyond explanation,
being is more than its representation,
it is the reality of star and stone,
or death would be merely transformation,
and not this loss that strikes us to the bone.

Chance at the Core

Chance at the core is deeper
than meaning to the eye,
chaos the cloud that hovers
between the ground and sky,
that world is deeply random
defeats the mind, you sigh.

Random the inner movement
time's least step in flight,
though moon moves in pure order
across the seas of night,
that all this is from nothing,
I sigh, seems nothing right.

But out of chance comes beauty,
true form is the child of light,
the particles that bind us
require no second sight,
they move, we sigh, forever,
in the play of have and might.

Woodland

I walk on matter, on the not-I,
the manifold bounds and bonds
of the universe, feet cannot enter:
feel resistance, know this tide.

Winter insects over grey turf
rise in the spring-like air,
a current of time lingers in space
of solid world, the unknown.

Fragile we walk the earth,
slide over rock, silt, sand
pass miles through brown grass
breathe under sunlit cloud.

What is this ground we step on?

Rose

Go silent rose,
go, flower of eternity,
tell her that knows
when there's no more of her and me,
what worlds must echo still,
to our mortality.

Go silent rose
all your rich petals, from the sun,
retreating, where pure snows
and time's true hours are gone,
be, there the mystery
of mind's eternity.

And say no more of us
than this will live
the life that dreaming glows
in lines the light can give:
be the undying rhyme,
be you the rose of time.

Longing is a World

Longing is a world,
we are not loved enough,
we do not love enough,
and longing is a world.

World is not enough,
the deep desire burns,
on towards further fire
and longing is a world.

Such purity as form or mind
as love and truth may be
meet in delight, defeat the night
and longing is a world.

Feeling: there lies humanity,
we are not loved enough,
but mind knows light is tangible,
and longing is a world.

Where Silence Ends

As I came to the place where silence ended
and love began,
my mind was not as it once intended,
driven by plan:
the richness comes from randomness
the world's alive in our first excess.

I walked the fields to where woods gleamed,
and leaves began,
though the darkness there still seemed
a friend to man:
complexity out of storm and stress
is what the sighing trees expressed.

And complexity's beauty: though truth is cold,
love draws us down
to what we learn, before the mind is old,
all we can own:
the endless moment, all hearts' confess
where we gave, and gazed at, what is best.

Where We Are

At the end of the first history
with the detritus from the journey.

Below, the sea that brought us here,
a scattering of cities, and enslaved minds.

Above, the stars in all directions
which are not where they were.

With this light on our hands
a signal, a blessing, a gift.

At the start of the New Life
with only ourselves and the Earth.

Other-wise

To love your mind. Love is patience,
love explores the detail loved,
does not disown what is not found
to be its blood and bone,
but something other-wise.
Love is the other, now,
I love your mind.

The Deeper Sweetness

Not to understand
the nature-users,
those impervious to
the deeper sweetness,
the silent Earth,

Spoilers of the world
we the late-comers,
survived once by respect
and now without respect
for shining Earth.

Politics is not love,
the mind engaged,
is not the loving heart,
what we can save,
of living Earth.

There is no place
for those who love the race
more than our cradle,
these flowing seas, these leaves
of turning Earth.

Between

More comfortable with inner silence,
sky's deepening blue, the falling
rising stars, the snow-black woods
the stillness in the grass,
the universal moment where the breath
ends breathing, and the mind
enters what is inward and between,
what is not human,
never will acknowledge
human thought, or process,
purpose, mind. There is
such comfort in the inner silence.

The Light, the Leaf

We will begin again without the names.
The one life is eternal. Nature there
and nothing changes, everything goes by.

We will begin again, but not the dream,
it passes. One life is eternal, you and I
naked mouth on mouth, a wheel turning,

pierces matter still, are spirits, spirits,
mind a maker and unceasing, and in line,
and form Nature is still there, the light, the leaf.

The Word

Comes from the inner depths of what you are
and no delusion, your audience the makers,
and then no more the makers. Silence where
we ourselves create beyond ourselves.

In time, or out of time, or of one time, the same,
from the one place with the sole intention,
the rest not worth a candle, the one spirit,

but Caliban's music, not Prospero's magic,
out of the deepest space of what you are,
ah, and with the purest of intentions.

Leaf Gazing

Climbing White Mountain
to watch the maple leaves,
seeing the white leaves
climbing Maple Mountain,

until the world grows still.
Water is the eye of the dragon,
coil on coil round the mountain,
disclosing its white leaves.

In Nature is our being
this hundred thousand years,
climbing through the silence,
to see the leaves burning,

birch, maple, mountain ash,
along the thousand hillsides
and through a hundred valleys
of the mountains of the mind.

The Sensation

Between two moments of eternity I live my life,
dark in the wood shadows, pale in the light,
of fields and slopes, bright hollows,
the landscapes between lives,

and almost seize once more what the child saw,
that inner echo of vibrating world, the wheel
in the sky, the mountain peak
of un-conveyable sensation.

Through us, and not despite us, being comes,
all this complexity, and what I do is richness
how I flower, the mind is caused
not uncaused mystery.

Myself, this living thing projects
onto the silent tapestry, hawks wheel
the world in silence reconfigures,
in the only space of time.

Self-Control

There is no message can convey
the complexity of everyday,
we echo between selves, 'friend' we say
and then a thousand intervening hours
of wishing, of suppressing the demand
for what cannot be given by circumstance,
hiding pain, fear, time, space, every thing,
writing the mind's pure drama on the wing.
All this there is no message to convey,
the thousand unseen movements day by day.

Centred

Then to speak out of truth's centre
call from the heart in spirit-meaning
the world-sorrow and mind's lightning,
Seafarer now at the earth's ending,
since all times end in self's singing.

Words to make, and then worlds
beyond earth's mountains fallen,
in forests down-slope into night's kingdom,
risen again then with the dawn clouds,
the light on streams, on cliffs' clinging.

This the clear truth, this the deepest,
unfamiliar the truth past all deceiving,
fire of the un-made universe, un-created,
of man the patchwork blown in a whirlwind
within this world, and all this world within.

The Light Within

Your thought elsewhere.
In nature mind returns
to its first wholeness. Form
is joy, the balm, the meadow-straw,
where spider, beetle crawl, ants fly,
the delicate intricate smallness
is the greatness of the world.

Love's union, that intense delight,
is bond, is tie, is inwardness transformed,
life's wholeness energised
in the open field, the spirit of light,
and not in dumb, dead religion
but vision risen, to fill the void
with love. Your thought elsewhere,

the light within.

Child-Eyed

Go beyond, no half-measures,
intensity tears the fabric
of the known, splinters
of being pierce your skin,
touch nature, touch mind,
bear true relation. Go, beyond.

Passes, it passes what you are,
and where you open on the brink
of centuries, space or silence,
where the child went, knot
of the web, curl of the bright leaf,
passes, re-passes, what you are.

Out of the space I can't convey
where being is an arc in the sky,
is a mountain there, its slopes
its wooded cliffs, is burning child,
is wheel of our unknowing, being
here, and beyond.

No Fences in the Way

No grass stirs. By speaking
you seek to enter silence?

What is it then, this world
the bird flies through?

Conscious mind projects
the world beyond, unconscious

of itself, and is projected.
Truth, beauty, the spontaneous heart.

When you find it, there's nothing there
where everything is there.

In the mountain stillness
be the bearded grass. Let go.

Injunction

Here in the silence of night
affirm your values.
True, sensitive, kind,
affirm your values.
In the valleys of love and beyond
affirm your values,
where the mind is not for sale,
affirm your values.

This is the starlit womb,
declare our presence.
Love, beauty, truth,
declare their presence.
In the fire of the galaxies
declare Earth's presence.
Mind and the planet alike,
preserve our presence.

The Womb

Pure landscape, grass in the wild wind,
all mortal beings sing self on self,
this is Earth, this fragile voyager,
intention-less, lovely, pure insensate
source we sprang from, tongue-less, mind-less.

We the voice, the creatures in whom love
self-born makes mysterious presence,
all that we feel and no way understand,
the one womb, kindness of flesh and sense,
yours Earth, dear in mind, tongue, essence.

For a Moment

Scrambling, cliff-wide hands
in the cleansing rain,
sea-stones in night-grass,
winds in the shore pine,
rocking the core of silence,
leaning on tree, watch cloud,
mind-rinsed beauty of being,
before words in the first knowledge.

Come to it, how it unfolds, the order
from chance, at the white fire
hedge-tangled, edge of the sea,
over the grooved dunes, bark
sand, pebble, the reef of time
and its changes, the gone things,
but nature, science, mind remain,
and we too out of the ground.

Sinking down to this earth
to the turf bank, under deep sky,
hands touch, as ever, as eternal
echo of other minds, hearts, spirits,
we too emblem, and moment, immortal.

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