

# Wayfaring

*'...No obstacle at all, this gate of grass.'*

*Murasaki: The Tale of Genji*

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## Wayfaring

Going back to the simple  
and the light.  
Spring on low hills,  
leafy corners,  
gateway places  
where the wayfarer's  
languid in sunlight,  
the silence deeper,  
and not even self  
in the grasses,  
no reflection in the water,  
simply  
the drifting heart.

All history gone,  
here is the creature;  
the swallows flicker  
over the river  
over fields,  
and mind is freer,  
tender as a new shoot,  
inwardly singing,  
the old world melted,  
a new begun,  
and the laws  
of being  
just what's in the heart.

Going home, to where  
is always home,  
all nature;  
no deeper in the great  
than in the small,  
not better  
and not gentler;  
here is truth,  
a loyalty to being,  
a response,  
and warmth,  
in the bowed fir,  
in the runnel.

Walking over dead branches,  
in the green  
of the wood,  
quieter now  
than the child's mind,  
quieter  
than the years done,  
quieter  
than past and future,  
wayfaring  
moment to moment,  
drinking from the stream  
in the breeze.

Going through,  
past the stillness,  
there  
at the end  
of the ride,  
going past  
every muteness  
the solidity  
of trees,  
slight as the feather  
on the ground,  
weightless  
as the cloud in the sky.

Gone  
through the brambles  
and the fern,  
gone  
sweetly  
through remembered  
spaces,  
gone from every  
thing that binds,  
gone from every  
other presence,  
back to the knowledge  
of the heart.

## Parting

The parting was fire,  
that separation ice,  
but friendship  
is new warmth  
deep as the woodland.

Nothing else  
will ever save us.  
Nothing more  
will flow  
from the universe.

And no years pass in the heart,  
no moments  
of meaning vanish;  
none and all,  
unique, belong to all.

The parting was flame,  
that absence void,  
but new friendship  
sends swallows  
through the night.

Even from far  
beyond the Lethe,  
even there,  
memory  
recalls a day.

The air was sweetly cold,  
the green river  
the immense distance  
between  
two near places.

The parting was ice,  
this space is fire  
between  
two  
interwoven minds.

## A Dream Of The Sea

It was a dream of the sea  
in the dark of night,  
of white breakers,  
emerald light  
a rocky shore  
its stone  
split like Inca boulders,  
a pure  
salt Atlantic wall.

There were no boats,  
but the grey seals  
were swimming darkly  
inshore,  
flickering shapes  
under the water  
it was a dream of the sea,  
and the sea-gods,  
all the true transformed.

Headland grasses blew,  
spray sang,  
and nothing more  
comes from eternity,  
our world, life  
has nothing else  
to offer,  
than that one,  
enduring dream.

Not outward  
don't turn there,  
turn within,  
push the gate  
into the silence,  
into the hush  
called memory,  
into the hollow  
above the sea.

And be still.  
It is a virtue.  
Whatever the planets  
out there bring us  
can they bring us  
the power  
of the dream  
of the moment,  
fixed forever,

in some strange region  
of process  
in the spirit,  
altered to the cellular  
tremor and the net  
of whatever was  
laid down,  
that beauty  
beyond conceiving?

It was a vision of the sea  
in its green singing,  
of a harmony  
which is the flavour  
of the being self;  
irreplaceable,  
irreducible,  
irrecoverable  
in each,

it was the breaker  
falling white  
in thunder,  
and the twilight  
star-begotten,  
it was the meaning  
ever the meaning  
always born  
of the dream within.

## Passage

Very old, this rose  
that winds its way  
to explode  
in light  
from the curving briar,  
then dives  
to the grey water,  
marvellous  
mysterious,  
in its whiteness,  
a rose  
like those that sang,  
medieval,  
almost wild,  
over dark earth.

Birds flicker in mist,  
drift among trees,  
swish over grasses,  
birds  
rise above cloud,  
then dive  
to the grey water,  
sweet  
and mysterious  
in their darkness,  
in their lives,  
beyond ours,  
on outspread wings,  
with secret cries,  
the wildness.

Trees gather,  
knots of stillness,  
on which  
you set a hand  
to feel existence,  
hold tight  
to quivering earth;  
trees gathered  
by forces  
in the seed,  
on which you can't  
set your hand.  
From the briar,  
to the branch,  
flies the bird.

## The Perfect Hour

Now I am speaking  
out of my deepest self,  
out of the dark core,  
and the light mind,  
out of the essence  
of the tao, the lines  
of flight, the soft  
dust on the way.

I am not speaking for you,  
nor for those I love,  
nor for the world  
you imagine you  
are part of, now I  
speak instead for all  
of nature moving,  
out of my very self.

I speak for the evening,  
for the leaves, the quiet,  
for the sky, one grey,  
for the woods, silent,  
and not for the human  
or the creature  
but for the beauty  
of inanimate music.

Now I am speaking  
not for the sake of being,  
not to be known  
by the listening,  
but out of an inner  
freedom, out of the hour  
before farewell,  
the perfect hour.

## Shower

Here, the rain falls,  
a quiet beginning,  
leaves drip grey light,  
sky colours darken,  
the line of the woods  
marks a limit  
on the distance,  
not under the air,  
etched on it.

The spirit drinks  
at the fountain  
of the rain  
exactly as the earth  
drinks, soaks up water,  
absorbs being,  
steeps  
in an absence of the sun  
as fine as presence.

The rain is the void  
beyond the sun,  
that makes the sun  
light in fire  
in the imagination.  
It is a gasp of time  
below the hidden stars,  
within it are the voices,  
the millennia of rain.

## Navigation Beyond

An old trail,  
scented with broom,  
and bitter wormwood  
grey ashy plant crumbling  
to fragrance in the hand,  
track that rims the quarry  
where the wildflowers  
overtake the human,  
and launch themselves  
more star-like  
at the stars.

Here tangled branches  
make parted ways,  
choose your silence.  
Either path's sweet.  
They lead  
into the heart  
into the memory,  
into the spirit, deep mind.  
A broken kiln is here,  
a small copse there,  
but either path is sweet.

You will find yourself,  
and no returning;  
explore your thought  
without meaning;  
quench your eye  
on un-designed form,  
your ear on formless music.  
The place has no location,  
no time, no coordinates,  
you need no map  
to lose it, or find it, again.

## In Which We Shine

I could sing to you;  
that's what poetry is, the singing;  
sing to you  
of the eternity we inhabit,  
the dark infinity  
in which  
we shine,  
perhaps the only lovers.

The poet wishes to be river,  
or wind blowing,  
or light over stones,  
beautiful  
fragmented,  
or the long threads  
of willow leaves moving  
in green river breeze.

I could rest under the yews  
here, above the water,  
beyond the dark eyes  
of the caves,  
the rock-pale towers,  
and watch this bird,  
dance in the light  
forage in the shade.

I could be one  
with the hundred million  
years,  
with the un-meaning  
of the vagrant process,  
wait for stars  
or slow cloud wreathing  
hills.

The true poet  
would not be human,  
but leaf, rain,  
or a single feeling  
coiling in the spirit,  
some aspect  
of existence  
unfit for life.

It is a calling  
outside the world,  
if you wish  
to understand it right,  
dedicated to a truth  
beyond all  
religion,  
a kindness to what is.

The true poet would be gentle;  
how can one kill the world?  
Faithful;  
it is all we have,  
all we will have had.  
And aware;  
perception is all,  
knowing is all.

I could take you  
to the track  
beside the river  
every river,  
through the wood  
every wood,  
take you  
into yourself;

Which is not thing,  
nor even process,  
truly,  
but a presence,  
a being here  
a having been,  
a ghost of light  
in shadow.

The unknown  
and tiny  
is as great  
as the immense,  
that is  
the first truth  
to comprehend,  
and the last.

This patch of grass  
no one  
may notice again  
for an age,  
this pebble  
white in the depths,  
or these plants  
in mist.

No one is here,  
no one is ever  
truly here,  
and no one passes through,  
and nothing sees  
we are alone.  
Be careful  
of one another.

## How Near

How long it takes  
to reach here,  
reach the lanes,  
white and silent,  
winding hedges,  
headlands  
on horizons,  
to be where the sea  
echoes in the hollows,  
and the windhover  
ignores  
the wayfarer.

You must lay aside time.  
You must dream,  
but the dream  
of memory,  
which is the substance  
of how we transmute  
the world  
to make it glimmer,  
glow, a tower  
built on a hill  
towards galaxies,  
built in the heart,

which is mind,  
heart is mind,  
whole feeling  
of the body  
substantiated.  
How long it takes  
to reach here,  
quiet enough  
to follow the thought  
be led by  
the message  
of the thought.

And the message is subtle,  
not what you  
expected,  
not a revelation  
of something  
outside you, or inside,  
but an unfurling  
of something  
neither outside  
nor within,  
a stillness  
palpable,

like a sweetness,  
a tenderness  
void of all desire,  
in the end a giving  
not a taking,  
or at least  
a realisation  
of the possibility  
of gift  
on a different earth  
in another universe,  
in a sought communion.

How long it takes to reach here,  
how hard to stay,  
touching a white stone  
cradled in warm heath, bracken,  
calmed by the sun,  
at one with the fatal sea  
that swirls and troubles  
the mind,  
how hard to transform  
samsara in the spirit,  
how far this place,  
how near.

## New Muse

If one made a poetry  
quieter than twilight,  
with all birds hushed,  
and the breeze fallen,

a poetry slenderer  
slighter than air  
or water or cloud  
or tender leaf-shoot,

a poetry of feeling,  
but not interaction,  
of emotion but not  
passion, or sadness,

a poetry balanced  
like that tiny stone,  
or the tree, on the hill,  
under all weathers.

If one made that,  
made it such  
it seemed to echo  
the silent past

history of place,  
present stillness,  
beauty of the done,  
truth of the lost,

a poetry delicate  
sensitive, kind,  
a patch of emerging  
blue in the white,

a ruffling of surface,  
a trembling of branch  
in an imperceptible  
stirring of world.

If one could do that,  
and enter the eye  
of the mouse,  
or the insect's ear,

then the new muse  
might exist,  
naturally sacred,  
not from beyond,

but a reflection  
of what subsists  
at the core of being  
the assertion of life,

we can never deny,  
the miraculous process  
of no creation,  
spontaneous being,

a muse of the instant,  
dark, and anonymous,  
and a muse of the place,  
the remembered, the twilight.

## Being Not Metaphor

Don't fashion the mountain,  
be the mountain, be leaf,  
as near as mind can get  
to the un-minded,  
not strident self  
asserting, denying  
it all,  
but the not-selves,  
all of equal being;  
and not the world  
you wish not to be part of,  
but the world you are,  
despite your thinking.

Don't seek to impose order,  
like this, accept the order  
that has being  
outside you,  
outside unreal self  
inside the real,  
accept a wind that blows  
the bowing of the trees,  
the sheets of rain,  
the ice, the air,  
avoid the myths,  
evade the metaphors,  
be free.

With mind intact,  
and there's the tension.  
Mind is the water,  
you must be the fall,  
parted  
by rock,  
nurturing rowans,  
foaming in clefts,  
singing deep under stone,  
and namelessly.  
Here is the tree  
at the far edge of space;  
here are we.

## Without Raging

Breath in the air  
like smoke,  
the roads are ice,  
the slope is deep snow  
sinking down  
to the depths  
of valley,  
the birds are still,  
or thunderous  
in the trees,  
for a white moment.  
Everything you are  
is a silence,  
more silent  
than when you sleep,  
less self  
less world,  
than dream,  
entering  
not creating,  
though both  
here and in dream  
self is powerless.

The light is grey  
and calm,  
the stone is pale,  
the river black  
with weirs of white  
and glassy green,  
your thought is light,  
it plays on twigs  
above the river,  
on walls along the heights,  
it is the thought of time  
becoming past  
in memory,  
of space becoming  
space-like metaphor,  
of how far out we are  
on the limb of mind,  
how distant  
from our origins,  
how far from the universe,  
how far from home,  
believing only  
in what we see and feel.

No, the purpose  
of communication  
is not to be oblique  
and baffle  
for the sake of order,  
but to say clearly  
where mind ends  
and being begins,  
as I am not the water  
but the flow is in me,  
and outside me,  
and I both see  
and am the seeing,  
content and form,  
process and outer object,  
both  
but not as the bird sees,  
quite,  
nor the next mind seeing,  
to which its past is brought,  
and assumed future,  
their interplay,  
in ringing present,

in a world without deities  
but not without value,  
the values  
those we inherit and refine,  
creature-created,  
gifts to the galaxy,  
gifts to the universe,  
gifts to ourselves above all,  
gifts like the bird's tenderness,  
the insect's endurance,  
the trickle of generations  
through an empty landscape,  
our perception of beauty,  
our concept of love,  
truth, freedom, sensitivity,  
those kinds of gifts.  
And no use raging,  
though the heart rages,  
a calmness  
must suffice,  
this river-run,  
a bare embrace of trees,  
heron's bowed presence.

## Troubling

Why the dislike  
of human perfection,  
the very buildings,  
while nature  
always soothes?

Why the deep troubling,  
as though the mind  
was not created  
for such a place  
or such a world?

Our incomplete spirits  
seek naked earth,  
the natural fires,  
the air and water,  
to make us whole.

Though everything falls  
everything rises again  
without us,  
lovers and loved,  
moon and stars.

To stand, to feel,  
these things are  
not obvious,  
half-learnt by  
the uncomfortable heart.

There is this dislike  
of human perfection,  
the too smooth statues,  
the too tall walls,  
the sun-drenched setting.

## The River-Bend

The river is dark,  
it was here  
as the  
history of place,  
it flowed  
and was not us,  
apart  
falling,  
not mind or body,  
but something other,  
matter moving  
energy sighing,  
knowing neither,  
a river  
without a boatman,  
dark in its name  
and nature.

The river voices  
a language,  
speaks a music,  
fills emptiness  
when no eye's here  
fills emptiness  
though non-existent  
in any human space,  
other than memory,  
and that was another river,  
flowing through us,  
as the heron in flight  
we disturbed  
was a grey heron of light  
in the mind  
flying through us.

Everything's altered  
by mind.  
The river knows neither.  
It exists in many ways,  
in a world outside  
which is non-world for us,  
inside too, where it is no more river  
than every flowing process  
thought of;  
exists between us part-shared,  
exists in each, specific,  
exists in general,  
exists as place and moment,  
as name and map,  
as, in the end, the data  
of the eye, out of the eye.

The river was dark,  
and the trees were gleaming  
against the ground  
and the pinnacles of rock  
along the river  
were brilliant, silent,  
tremor of water beneath,  
now the river  
is in us,  
now it flows in us,  
and will flow there too perhaps  
still; we believe  
it will if we go there,  
yet how will  
that matter?  
It flows.

## Leavings

It is not my poetry you want,  
nor I,  
it is the true speaking,  
the true seeing.  
Other mind  
is not deceived,  
it wants no heroes.  
It is not my cunning  
you desire,  
my knowledge,  
my skill,  
but the essence of my commitment,  
the strength of my faith  
in being.

And the book turned down  
on the table,  
has no need  
of my fire and ice,  
waits there indifferent  
to us all,  
to all the tradition,  
it merely wants speech,  
the speakers, the voices;  
quits the discarded husk,  
for eternal essence;  
has never a feeling,  
for the dead ghost,  
whose silvery light lies here.

It is not a question of form,  
or a matter of content.  
What you want from me,  
is the key to our being,  
the key to life eternal,  
the keys of recognition,  
empathy, kindness,  
and not the mind  
raging forever  
at its own non-answers,  
not my eccentric music,  
not the fixed lake  
through which  
a river flows,

darkly rhythmic,  
dark in its flowing;  
not the same water,  
clearer, deeper,  
blackier, lighter,  
yet the same river  
forever moving  
under black branches,  
under black stars.  
What you want from me  
is not this,  
thought seething  
body breathing  
troubled sighing,

but the wind's meaning,  
the eye's meaning,  
how solitude burns,  
why departure glistens,  
the being of mountain,  
the bowing of pine,  
the crows' sense of flight  
the sun's wild ringing,  
is what you wish from me,  
and not poetry,  
not what the mind-muse leaves  
when it, shuddering,  
turns  
with no goodbye.

## The Mind-Muse

Say this to the mind-muse  
we understand  
how hard truth is,  
how form may lie,  
and be part of the lack  
of humility in us,  
survival-pride.

Say this to the dark form,  
in the grey mantle,  
under the tree,  
beside the stone,  
at the junction  
of river and light,  
the infinite river,

say we have tried,  
say how we have lied,  
say we need  
the voice from the dark,  
the voice from the silence  
to glitter within us,

say we have seen the place  
in the wood,  
seen the white flower dying,  
the cloud ahead  
the water flowing,  
seen it all,  
say this to the metaphor,

this to the symbol,  
and tongue of fire,  
to the meaningless  
except in the mind,  
say to the mind-muse,  
how we will it, will truth  
to exist,

out of black space  
in the heart,  
of darkness by water,  
the lacquer of tao  
the thing that twists  
in the night  
between stars,

say to the mind-muse, we are  
and what we are  
is afraid, is formless,  
is broken by ice  
of truth, in the spirit,  
and our defence  
is eternal illusion.

## Not Performance

This is a different kind  
of poetry.  
It's the performance I don't accept,  
the fundamental lie  
of the performance.  
Nature – in clouds, stones, trees –  
no, is never a performance,  
is always and only ever the thing that is.

And the mind and heart  
in deep feeling  
are never performance;  
the stage is a metaphor  
but this is no stage,  
this is the passion itself,  
not tragedy, not ironic comedy;  
this is sole being,

and another way  
of saying to you,  
that the rest is literature.  
That every performance  
here is an attempt  
at non-performance,  
at saying nothing,  
and pointing everywhere.

## The In-Itself Outside Itself

The world glistens in stillness here,  
there are willows  
and leaves on the water,  
a hiss of grasses;  
it is not for us:  
this world shines, but not for us,  
unobserved,  
without creature  
unobservable.

Let it be there  
without ulterior being,  
naked to universe,  
part of that universe,  
let it not be  
a metaphor to humanity,  
nor any kind of mirror  
or echo,  
but freedom, whole and complete.

Let it not be in me,  
nor in you, myth,  
material or challenge,  
let it drift slowly  
in its deep darkness  
which manifests as light,  
let it be the untouchable  
signifier  
of the other we cannot be.

## Anonymous

To create it all  
and then anonymous  
and still,  
leave it lie unpublished.

To create it all  
then like those makers  
of gleaming Buddhas  
and dancing Shivas wait, unknown.

To be an undiscovered master  
who for self-completion  
painted the bamboos  
and the snowy waters.

To be the musician  
forming songs  
in the mind,  
as melodies for a people,

for love of such,  
and with no expectation  
of their survival;  
for tenderness not greatness,

seems beyond us now.  
There's a myth  
of the unknown immortals,  
who keep the world alive,

walking among us,  
unrecognised, intrinsically  
unidentifiable,  
passing us by in the street.

## Long After

Is there a quieter,  
not the volcanic anger  
of green life  
bursting the everglades,  
blue of a sea,  
or concatenation of stars  
when galaxies collide  
in some telescope's eye?

Is there a smaller,  
not mountain or river,  
forest or field,  
but less than the single nettle,  
or the drop of rainbow water,  
or a flicker of light  
from the least gleam  
in the dark?

Is there a truer,  
not the maker of rhetoric, not the actor,  
not the mover or shaker,  
but slight as the stream  
from under the shale,  
those whispers of loss  
long after ending,  
those irretrievable flames.

## Nowhere To Flee

Values, they are our future.  
Forget the technologies,  
Ignore the science,  
the dead demons  
of fantastic religions,  
the politics of failure,  
the economics of prisons,  
none of those will save us.

Values, they are our future,  
Ethics, the study of humanity.  
Science leads nowhere,  
religion is nowhere,  
politics are power  
and power is empty,  
economics despoils us.  
Values – our future.

And values sing of the future  
beyond the constraints  
of races and nations,  
of one humanity, on this planet,  
which already contains every other,  
and the universe ends here;  
there is nowhere to flee,  
value is future.

## Substance And The Void

Watching the grass sway,  
stem and stem,  
watching the process,  
I exist  
between the mind  
and world,  
in the unreal,  
both and neither.  
Watching  
the grass.

Or considering wave,  
a green drum,  
in endless  
motion of the seas,  
of which there is no termination;  
hearing the tao,  
hearing the noise  
of the waterfall, also,  
the ice-grey flow,  
cascading downwards,

there is a place to exist,  
between the outer  
and the inner,  
which is in both,  
and beyond both,  
such is *nirvana*,  
wholly here  
and nowhere,  
as you are substance  
and the void.

## One Long Ridge

One long ridge below the mountain.  
Walking through cut wood,  
after logging,  
witnessing crest after crest  
rise, subside,  
following the dance of the trees,  
their obliquities,  
their parallax of object  
in the moving eye,  
denying metaphor,  
listening to the sound  
of grass,  
the noise of leaves,  
the miles  
of granite, air,  
cloud, beauty.

A mind of light.  
Sinking through soft ground  
down the valley,  
following wall,  
this is wayfaring,  
through ancient world  
still dedicated  
to the matter,  
still frozen  
and on fire.  
The glittering tree,  
half green, half flame,  
that's nature,  
as we are half the burning  
of the body,  
half dark verdancy of mind.

Right emotion saves us.  
Feeling is where  
values are embodied.  
Why science,  
though dispelling demons,  
cannot save us.  
since facts are not values,  
nor is process,  
though truth  
itself may be a value.  
Values are choices  
of the free mind,  
destinations,  
for the wayfarer, or rather  
paths,  
like sensitivity and kindness.

Sliding on a half-made trail,  
considering values,  
through woods of malachite  
and verdigris,  
I try to understand  
why nature  
itself seems a value,  
something to do  
with what has no intentions on us,  
yet satisfies the need for beauty,  
freedom, honesty;  
in the creatures,  
unassuming endurance;  
in the trees, grace;  
in the waters, purity.

Emerging on a shelf of stone  
above a thousand feet of light,  
with, far below, a rock-choked valley.  
Why a little watershed  
is etched in memory,  
the fall opposite,  
a white thread of silence,  
the mind working,  
on values  
and how we balance them; achieve  
the middle way  
towards creation  
not destruction;  
creation which is itself  
a value,  
a way, and a destination.

## Poetry Can Do Didactic Too

Why is navigating life so hard?  
Why is moral discourse  
two thirds of the language  
(you doubt it: go and see the thesaurus)  
if you ignore the technical terms?  
Because ethics is us,  
is the core of what we will be,  
and not the rest;  
not the technologies,  
or the distractions;  
morality is why  
history has not ended,  
why it will always be  
difficult to live,  
even if we're on a billion planets,  
even when we possess  
the true description of mind.

Morality is choice.  
And its difficulty  
is down to ambivalence;  
that reality that values conflict,  
interact, and overlap,  
that there is always  
a balancing act to achieve,  
the dance on the wire,  
because so many qualities  
work both ways,  
for creation or destruction,  
as: curiosity, passion, pride,  
intelligence, skill,  
competitiveness, belief;  
because the list of truly  
destructive values  
is quite brief.

As: cunning, deception,  
control, power-seeking,  
exclusion, discrimination,  
though the list  
of their associated behaviours,  
is rather long, starting with  
violence, cowardice, greed,  
cruelty and selfishness.  
But it's the ambivalence  
of so much that makes life  
a constant process of decision,  
a battle against time,  
which is why remorse  
is a deepest feeling;  
our inability to alter the done  
undoes us,  
to change the path we chose.

## In the Valley

I fell asleep in the grass and heath,  
by the holly tree,  
on the slope above the stream;  
woke and watched the crows flying  
bright birds, large-brained,  
a buzzard, pigeons, all  
in a long arc under a domed sky  
filled with trains of cloud  
to every horizon,  
slow floaters moving west,  
covering, and uncovering,  
the sun.

Here you need a mind of summer,  
life is the dance  
of light on water,  
and a honeyed silence,  
through which a cool wind moves  
when the sun is masked,  
the grass is deep, dry,  
the heath is twisted complex  
subtle colours, scents;  
I think of our wars and conflicts,  
our strange misery  
that we are alone  
that the demons we dreamed  
of the last four thousand years  
were fantasies,  
and what exists  
is this brilliant flow  
which allows us to take part.

Hard to describe  
the simplicity  
and the depth  
of beauty here,  
in a place not special  
but a gift of the natural  
as fine as all  
its billion spaces  
on this planet,  
not untouched  
but left by humanity,  
momentarily un-despoiled.

Winter too has its warmth  
in the spirit.  
It is only our fear  
of freedom,  
that makes our misery,  
fear of the void,  
through which we fall,  
on every side,  
earth resting on nothing  
in every direction,  
held like a blue-white mottled bead  
on space-time's  
whirling string;  
and fall in the mind  
through non-intention,  
the utter dependence  
of all our purposes  
on ourselves,  
we, out of nature's sieve,  
though there is no hand  
behind the winnowing.

You need to know freedom  
to consider the light and the leaves  
of the holly echoing the sun;  
be still a while  
to feel the birches tremble in air,  
see the pine-trees' green in the far glimmer  
of April ending;  
to hear the land sounding beneath your back,  
the warm breeze rustling  
in last autumn's veils of leaf;  
before the void  
inside you and beyond  
fills with the endless forms  
of nothingness,  
the seething panoply,  
which is samsara *and* nirvana.  
Everything comes of nothing,  
that is the secret,  
the nothing that being is,  
what it engenders.

## Why Be Lonely?

Why be lonely  
in this loneliest of auras,  
these still and twilight woods  
through which the stars  
out of Keats' poem, glitter  
among dark leaves?

Is it purpose you look for?  
Don't search for it in science.  
Nature apart from the creature  
is process not purpose.  
Science can't invent intent  
if there is none;

and don't say  
the purpose of the rose  
is to make more roses.  
Nature without creature  
simply does what it does,  
what it is, not what it's for.

Why be lonely  
to the sighing of the sea,  
to the golden traffic  
of innumerable murmurs?  
Sea of the universe,  
where the galaxies

like great ships sail  
from nowhere to no end.

## Black Flowers

I walked through myself  
and found, on the other side,  
the deeper strangeness,  
like walking in silence  
over every kind of land;  
heath and by streams in the valley,  
over wooded heights, to lakes  
beyond cool forest, all there  
in the circuit of a few square miles.

Nothing coming from self alone,  
or world alone,  
but a constant interaction of both,  
to form the unreal.  
Futile idealism, realism,  
meaningless self,  
useless identity,  
when all that matters here  
is drifting forwards and being.

Nothing to brood over:  
let the wood-pigeon crack  
the stillness, shatter the emerald  
muteness of leaves,  
rather than murmur  
over the windless world;  
let beauty, delight, love  
for this, shimmer in mind,  
the only place they can.

Let imagination sing  
in the hostile spaces,  
they the surprisingly benign,  
beyond any cause or reason;  
let the black flowers of stars  
shine in the negative deeps,  
magnificence quell our tears;  
let mind be the matrix of meaning,  
the galaxies shine in their fields.

## Diamond Eye

All night under Perseus and the Plough,  
dreaming, so young once,  
about personal destiny,  
when we have no destiny,  
only flexibility,  
spontaneity maybe,  
the skill to take  
advantage of chance,  
which is the movement  
of intertwined process,  
and nothing about us.

The stars in their cold dresses  
not even hanging there;  
nothing hangs in space,  
there is nowhere to hang from,  
nothing to hang towards,  
everywhere universe centres  
from every side,  
and is everywhere centred.  
Now too careful of cold;  
out to breathe night breath,  
to seize the diamond eye.

Maybe listen to a fox moving,  
an owl testing the darkness,  
a mouse in the shrubs,  
a dog puzzled by wildness.  
Knowing chance concatenation  
slow-changed constellation,  
everything solid shifting,  
a life in a cry in the night,  
and a flurry of darkness.  
Too sensible now to let the lances  
Of light transfix my brow.

## They See Through and Past You

Here is the child  
wayfaring always  
in deep imagination;  
and now having been  
and returned,  
so hard to get back  
to that haunted place,  
filled with the possible  
and not the impossible-known.

Yes the trees limit this path,  
but why be subservient to trees?  
or suffer because of doves,  
or be slaves of the briars  
curling down  
out of paths not ours  
to snare every stumble?  
Why be anything less than that  
Vast tremor of mind?

Don't disown the children.  
You may be less.  
Disown power  
and the emptiness.  
The child sees your nakedness  
inarticulately,  
how you fumble  
at any explanation,  
carve out the rooms of despair.

## Terrestrial

Yes, it eases me to think of her,  
as Arnaut said,  
and she increases love,  
like the tiny insects  
the dancers in the grass.

Inextinguishable beauty,  
is in the mind, real:  
thought against tyranny,  
dearth of violence,  
slow, slow civilisation,

longer than we would like,  
to reach  
respect for the creatures,  
for each other,  
for the planet,  
Earth without prejudice,

but in the end the heart  
collected,  
and the yew tree  
splitting stone  
on those cliffs remembered,  
lovely, winter-patterned.

Out of it all,  
the love, the form,  
and within,  
all the process;  
the flow  
that no one strays from.

Love in the mind,  
against all forms of power,  
and the sight of her  
the seed of delight,  
and all pain gone,  
a light of kindness.

The flame of living vision,  
that might redeem  
in some way  
the shuffling pain  
of being,  
and inner agony.

Yes, it eases me to think of her:  
against all tyranny,  
all exploitation.  
Oh, what is luminous  
is freely given,  
is liberation.

Walk free now through the gate of intellect.

## The Wall

Is history fallen:  
shattered ruins,  
everything  
Pound tried to gather together,  
the shining lights,  
good for love and beauty,  
if short on truth.  
Telling us at least  
how to be,  
and nothing new.  
Go to the poets  
who lived among barbarians,  
to understand your century.

Is nature moving:  
slow as the rain  
to down a dead tree-trunk,  
or ice to split the rock,  
or mind to make creation,  
is the green fern,  
and the moss and lichen.  
Yes the music is beautiful,  
and the slender archways,  
but not the idea  
behind them,  
which was power,  
and human error.

Is a stony metaphor:  
not simply a broken boundary,  
a failure to make order  
of our kind  
in a world more deeply ordered,  
a chaos  
that make us fearful,  
only passing by, we transients,  
where world more permanent  
exists beyond forever,  
we here, then gone, it stays  
and shines  
to no intent.

Is a gleaming gesture:  
from a deeper landscape  
the memory,  
that comes to me  
to light the troubled hours,  
cure against time, fate, boredom;  
and a ledge in a dark ravine  
in a pool of fire  
from a dying sun;  
and a silvered frieze  
in an emerald well,  
where moon is glass  
and every breeze is fragrance.

Is our shattered realm of poetry,  
this fallen age,  
our small affairs  
which is where we end,  
now part of the great affair,  
that never required us;  
this return to the first dawns  
and the first world;  
this return to sanity,  
to the love and beauty,  
formed of the greater truth,  
free of the lies of four thousand years,  
this naked universe.

## Gift Of The Ring-Makers

Westward, where long ago  
some race or other  
excavated stone to make the ring,  
and left behind  
something more beautiful,  
a silent quarry,  
the bracken and the fern,  
the green coolness,  
the purple stems,  
the thin grassy smoke  
of showering pollen.  
You'll get here on a lost trail,  
not by mountains,  
but on a mountain's back,  
up by the long valley  
of trees and flowers.

A place like the places  
that are not  
the ones we picture,  
in those bright materials  
meant for persuasion,  
those spectaculars:  
here there is almost nothing  
spectacular,  
except you can step  
straight into the universe  
and sing with the galaxies  
if you so choose,  
though you can do that  
with a single pebble, frond, star.  
This is the place called: rest your spirit,  
free your mind.

Heath is warm and gentle,  
or cool and tender,  
depending on whether  
it's noon or evening.  
If blood has ever been shed  
here, the stain has vanished,  
the chemical transformations  
are complete, the dead  
are dead, and no,  
not sleeping,  
but remaindered,  
old atoms of universe  
gone back to be  
its fresh materials.  
Heath is the furry pelt,  
the hot tongue, the ice-cool lick.

Here they dug in the earth,  
to go worship a deity,  
and even their deity in the mind  
passed them by.  
But what they left,  
was treasure,  
marvellous thistles, nettles,  
blue wild flowers,  
tormentil and  
white bed-straw stars,  
nothing whatsoever  
here of power,  
a sanity wholly  
beyond the human,  
that is still here now,  
and they are gone.

## The Error

It was all an error;  
We have to start again,  
though with what we know,  
which is difficult.

It was all a long mistake,  
a self-deception,  
through which remarkably  
the values passed,

the secular breath  
from the far grasslands,  
the forests and the lakes  
before the deserts.

It was all our fault,  
but somehow the values  
survived the journey,  
with the knowledge,

of what really is.  
So we still have dangerous love,  
dangerous truth,  
dangerous beauty.

It was all a diversion  
on the way,  
a many thousand year  
long diversion,

To understand rights,  
and affection,  
form and meaning  
and relationship.

It was all an error,  
all those costumes,  
all those stones,  
all that anguish,

simply to reach  
this space of landscape  
and look again  
at where we began.

## The Happy Traveller

The way is beautiful,  
though the wayfarer less so;  
the traveller at the gate  
is still here,  
gazing at the meadow  
bright with yellows,  
with a river at its end  
green as ice.

The dust of the journey  
can't mask the sweetness,  
that sinks  
through the deeps of the mind,  
and the eye is coolest  
in the trees,  
the body  
most at ease in the silence.

The moon and the bird rise,  
the rose,  
and our slow liberties,  
while the blue wind ruffles  
shining leaves,  
the traveller  
listens to the universe,  
the voiceless sound.

This is the happy traveller  
who goes  
through a space  
that can't be grasped,  
gently parts the gate of grass,  
a moment gone,  
leaving  
never a trace of self behind.

## Desperations

It must be desperate enough  
for us, is it so?  
To make the voice, I mean,  
lift above the silence,  
the silence of the many speakers,  
the dumbness of the endless talking.

We must be desperate enough to utter  
with the voice of leaves  
and creatures,  
the voice of the continental winds,  
against the dark unyielding river,  
the black river of dissuasion.

The time must be desperate enough,  
beneath the surface –  
when is it not so? –  
to hear the weeping of the moment,  
as, without recourse, it alters forever;  
the tremor of something departing.

The mind, the heart, the spirit,  
no matter what you call this,  
must be desperate enough  
to write in blood,  
to open the black vein if Nero  
demands we show what 'human' means.

## Fragments of Crystal

The dark hills, beyond metaphor waited  
for our hour of resolution.

Metamorphosis is life's  
last mystery, the stir  
of rapid light in the trees;  
so colour becomes something other  
than nature of object,  
a premonition of orbit,  
a well of unknown seed.

The echo of thunder  
embraced the vibrant green  
pallid against black volumes  
that rolled over the silvered skyline.  
I was broken down to the cell,  
to the fibre of flint in the vein,  
to the shattered bole  
that waved its wreath  
of entangled foliage.

You and I were neither here nor there  
in the unforeseen scheme;  
appalled by memory,  
haunted by vision,  
suffocated by dream;  
and on the white sand of the river's  
forgetful waters  
fragments of crystal shone  
among half-buried leaves.

Dark slopes hovered beyond metaphor  
suspended themselves over bays of light,  
over granite appearance,  
the rock of the self  
molten in sunbeams,  
where the drunken butterfly  
sways from the hot afternoon  
to the stone. Psyche alighted,  
devastated mind quivered.

Here then the heartland,  
we might never have left,  
a child-eye roaming the shadow  
crossing the atlas of eyelids,  
transmuting twice-resonant places,  
so much the greater  
than any spaces we see,  
and raised over pure time,  
bright pillars standing on time.

I altered. I flowed through myself, I returned  
among years, and was nothing except what I was,  
and am nothing now that I am,  
a transmutation of walls,  
a change like that sudden disturbance  
deep in the glassy water,  
a mindless quivering there  
of whatever becomes  
of the done and gone.

Into creatures, or streams,  
or branches seeping gold resin,  
into objects, or others, we move  
without myths, naked of shade;  
like soft smoke flowing, or water,  
our script scrolled in the air,  
our intertwined voices,  
our exchanges on tongue, in the tongue,  
of impossible form.

## White Air

You think the stones, the power, make truth?  
See the insect climb the grass,  
or the beauty it represents  
kindle luminescence in the mind.

You think the names, the panoply  
the trappings, the massive darkness,  
outshine the simple light  
of a single act of friendship?

You think civilisation worth a jot,  
that pretends to anything but values,  
I mean the values of the mind,  
not the gold, the glitter and the toys.

A hundred thousand years  
before T'ang,  
more than you and I know shone  
under Perseus and the Pole,

travelling under other guise,  
indifferent to later names.  
Our myths are without strength,  
All our texts will be palimpsests.

All that effort  
to grasp the moment,  
the white air,  
gone, through the trees.

## Passing

Within this light is the bliss,  
this patch of sun  
on the wheat-field,  
this corner of eternity:  
there's Blake passing,  
and Neruda.

Purify the mind  
in the stream.  
Cool your feet  
in the flow.  
We are what is passing by  
these other things passing slowly.

Fresh fronds, plants,  
herbs maybe, tender green  
anyway, at water's edge –  
a snail too, as a witness –  
grace, mercy and kindness,  
these the leaves that we need.

Out of us strangely  
the love flows,  
to us strangely  
it returns,  
made it seems by the winnowing,  
but no less magical for that.

Paradise is light on the fields,  
the meaning of the beloved,  
the heart's affections  
and the silence,  
in which this passing  
is expressed.

## Wasp

Sister, my sister,  
the wasp on the leaf,  
yellow and black  
the colours of being,  
sing of the night  
sister, my sister,  
and sing of the sun.

Flame in the mind,  
sister, my sister,  
the new age begun  
will it be your time,  
stinging and bitter,  
sister, my sister  
of charcoal and fire?

Sister, my sister,  
wasp on the breeze,  
ochre and ebony,  
colours of being,  
sing of the darkness,  
sister, my sister,  
then sing of the light.

## Est-il Paradis?

This bright meadow,  
lacking all deceit,  
the insects like innumerable  
sparks, flying through the light,  
these purer spirits.  
Behind here are mountains,  
uncut forest,  
endless patterns  
of cloud and stone.

Silent now,  
no exploiters,  
this silent place  
of my affection.  
And the gate always open  
which is hidden,  
which is holy,  
where the mice, moths,  
and butterflies play.

This bright meadow,  
sweet nature.  
There is order  
in the process,  
not design.  
The only place  
we can build  
our dream is in  
the human mind.

Oh, that first fatal error,  
that first wrong inference:  
yes, there is order  
in the process,  
but no, there is no design.  
And grace, and courage,  
out of the creatures,  
all their virtues  
we inherit.

Bright meadow,  
I inherit your shining,  
delicacy, mystery,  
not a mystery of structure  
but a mystery of being,  
the quiddity  
of this paradise,  
that we contemplate  
in the mind.

## Be Free

Forget the religion,  
and the history,  
the tyrants who saw  
lovely things created  
were tyrants;  
we are free  
relatively speaking.

Forget all empty power,  
its corruption,  
as Adams said, always there,  
go back  
to ancient ignorance  
affection,  
the beauty of the trees.

Those who built the great city,  
in the mind,  
the great dream,  
simply falsified the world,  
now we have  
to get back behind,  
back to the wayfarer's stream.

So much to jettison,  
yet much to keep,  
the art, that is our living cry;  
the science, our knowledge now,  
and our values,  
hard won  
through forty centuries.

All those fragments,  
but don't be sad,  
the meadow is still sacred,  
the gate of grass  
is hidden here, and holy.  
Understand the endless flow,  
forget the falsities, be free.

## After The Climb

You have to climb a long way  
to reach the starting-point again.  
You have to fall off the mountain,  
to see it clear.  
Forget the philosophy, the religion,  
the science, the art, the long living,  
to ground yourself in beauty, truth, love.

Out of them all other values flow,  
to them the emotions gather,  
with affection, sincerity, courage,  
with honesty, and sensitivity.  
You have to demolish centuries  
to be able  
to live in your own.

And return to idling by the stream,  
cleansing head and feet in the river,  
watching the blue smoke rise,  
looking at the flowers  
among the trees,  
letting go of all this life,  
passing through what will never die.

## Mist In The Meadow

No, Nature's not for sale;  
*Wu szu hsieh*, and  
No crooked thoughts.

We've been winnowed,  
and here we are,  
lost deep in the grass.

Dancing spirits,  
beauty in the wind,  
all those trees.

Love, creator of radiance,  
white ghosts of butterflies,  
a whole  
'civilisation' there.

Benevolence,  
light in the mind;  
this dancing floor  
of moon and stars.

A white mist in the meadow,  
pale dew on the leaves;  
we go after knowledge,  
but here's the house of the heart.

## Ours To Do

Fragmentation is no problem.  
eternity in a blink of the eye;  
water, in the hollow tree,  
spilling down grey bark  
cools the mind.

Underneath it, make a unity,  
not from masks and forms,  
but out of the human vision  
that dreamed beauty  
for three thousand years,

and trickles bright light  
through the grass,  
ripples under stalks,  
and stems,  
makes those little waves of being.

Gold burns in the gloom,  
sunlight sings on the leaf,  
civilisation is a flow,  
dependent  
only on the spirit.

## Slope By The River

The gate is holy,  
*Kuan*, the gate is open.  
Not enough concentration  
on the living spirit,  
the seethe of voices,  
too much attention  
to the deathly in the process;  
I mean, in what we celebrate,  
and how we celebrate it.

Flame of light in the meadow.  
The white horse canters.  
The butterflies  
move in ghostly dance,  
the breeze  
stirs the grass pollen.  
And here is the river,  
still, green, flow,  
the river that never changes.

## Light In The Air

Light in the air,  
and there's the wayfarer  
letting go  
of the way.

On high ramparts  
smoke of sunset,  
the gold and red  
contest the stars.

At home in the galaxy,  
the galaxy home in the void,  
I know where I'll return,  
Letting go, light in air.

## Grass Is An Institution

Death masks of dead religions,  
vain concepts, useless forms,  
but grass is an institution,  
its gate is radiance.

No gods to harm,  
no rituals,  
just the waving stalks,  
the emerald stems.

Form's a function of the intellect,  
true, but the seeing eye  
is part of mind,  
all beauty driven by delight,

The barb of fire.  
Sun-fire filtered through  
the pastoral shade,  
to the insects' fine domain.

Thunder of meaning gone  
from the universe,  
intentionless silence  
moves in freedom;

it takes some getting used to;  
the field of butterflies,  
the presence of flowers,  
the mountain peak fallen,

and here we are,  
in what seems like bathos,  
until the heart shines,  
intellect, the graces.

Not enough time,  
not enough mind  
for all this  
beauty,

but the grass soothes,  
the trickle of light,  
beyond  
the loss of the dream.

And we can't always  
be thinking elegy,  
in the grass  
that thinks nothing.

## Possibility

One voice alone can't make it,  
sustain the beauty,  
the milk-weed,  
the sunlit mountain rain,

One delicate mind, picking  
its way through silences  
asking silence  
muteness of ritual, absence of voice.

One mind over a snowfield,  
or under sequoias,  
or damming the waterfall  
with ice-cold pebbles.

One mind can't be the intent  
a universe lacks,  
except on behalf of that mind itself,  
and love needs eyes.

But one mind in the sleeping grass,  
one dormant mind,  
not daring to wake  
might sustain the dream.

Spider's necklet on dawn furze,  
frost white on the pine,  
flicker of sun-fire through branches,  
swifts in the fields.

One mind can sustain perhaps  
the friendship  
to call back paradise  
inextinguishable

in the human mind,  
whether communion  
of spirit,  
or solo rapture.

A wing-feather in the grass,  
a snail-shell on the stone,  
dust, moss, twigs,  
green fern.

Drawing the mind back  
through light  
to wide skies,  
to possibility.

## The Burning Man

Yes, I have  
avoided the darkness,  
turned back  
from the places that ruin,  
having been there  
having lived through  
the somnolent world  
and its nightmares.

Is it us there,  
or only  
a trick of the mind?  
Our shadow in mirrors,  
endlessly echoing green.  
A dumb sense  
like the return  
to dark childhood memories,

or the ghosts on the moor  
of a heart that tears  
at its veins  
and rails at reality,  
for not believing  
in us, for not seeing us  
in its blind eyes  
of in-appetency  
and continuance.

The moon tonight  
is a tremor  
of fire and sweetness,  
against the blank chill,  
the lake of meandering silence,  
It's not a question of truth  
but of marvellous meaning  
of the strength for intent,

of the child's eye  
returned,  
the eye of the heron,  
the eye of the red kite circling,  
or of the windhover,  
the eye of the clinging marsh  
an indifferent wood,  
full of its being.

I fail again to make do  
with what is, and not the desired,  
the fire and the sweetness,  
become the burning man  
on the snowbound earth,  
whose flames  
are unhidden, even by stone;  
here, and once more, is their light.

And the moon makes a tremor in darkest water,  
conjures with shadow its candour on grass,  
offers its symbol of  
fire and sweetness, the fury  
of time in the veins  
and no immortality  
for mind.

And all this is you, my sister,  
all this too is your motion  
your intricate bright multiple barb in the heart,  
your compassion of roots,  
like the moonlight  
under the feet of the alders,  
and a heron's stride deep.

All this is the memory of cicadas  
sawing the night by the vast river,  
as if those leaves blew  
through the night in their pain,  
in metallic howling  
the pain of birth death in a night's space,  
of waters black flow,  
of unstoppable fall.

I hold back, I burn,  
I scorch to the movement of hours,  
the accumulation of days,  
I hold the bones of the world  
only ash in your sight  
and I show you them living,  
I show you all that is left,  
the green pyre of our loves.

## Signs in the Stone

It is simply not poetry's task to explain  
the world,  
it is poetry's task to scream.  
If you hear the screaming,  
like the utterance  
deep in the whorls of the conch,  
or the sap of the branch in the fire  
(an image from Dante)  
a whisper from over Styx,  
or the pain  
that emanates from the steel  
of the night-bound cicadas,  
you will know  
it is not a human scream,  
it is more white noise,  
or the murmur  
out of the universe  
of what is not sound  
but would be sound  
in our air,  
say the tempests on Mars,  
or the green stem's dying.

Sometimes it's a howling  
of joy, like the pigeon's bubbling  
in the heights of the tree,  
or the blind wave's cascade  
into whiteness,  
then you must listen,  
it is our calling,  
more than the other,  
more than the muse  
or the white caryatid, the moon on the arch  
of the cut stone cry of the hand,  
more than the dark  
blood pooling the sand,  
a tremor of fire of delight  
like the birth of a star  
a mindless shining in silence,  
an intentionless beam a ray of the night  
that picks out our frail barque  
our blue orb  
in its globule of blackness,  
where it floats within,  
look no hands,

look no feet.  
It is not poetry's task  
to describe in equations  
the pulse of your motions of thought  
of the networks that flare,  
it may linger an hour or two  
with the moonlight on crystal salvers  
that tile the dark,  
or drift with the grass,  
dance with the seed-heads,  
blow over wastelands,  
root in the unseen, unknown  
anonymous corners  
of whatever is.  
It has the right,  
it has offered its blood  
to the broken demons,  
and melted all gods,  
it has followed the way,  
and made sacred,  
it has blessed  
the wayfarer, its friend.

## Nothing Else Will

Precisely we  
(I mean the creatures,  
with a little help from the process)  
made the meaning and made grace.

We, yes we, made love and kindness,  
made affection,  
beauty out of sensitivity,  
in truth-delight, in greater equity.

We were the makers,  
we could make it still,  
given sufficient reverence,  
enough plain silence;

though most likely the one alone,  
following a path  
through the grass,  
invisibly.

Most likely the one alone,  
in the roadside grass,  
watching what passes,  
stepping to the other side,

or in the stillness,  
in the concentration,  
in the deep field,  
hand, eye, ear, making.

If we ceased destruction,  
precisely we  
might build it all again.  
The gate is holy.

## Green Ways

Down green tracks the singing grasses.  
If we lose those we lose everything.

Over the winding tracks the thorn trees  
on the walls, voiceless their dark message.

Along soft ways the silent wildflowers.  
If we lose these we lose everything.

## Listening to the Movement

Bringing a little intellect to the process,  
a little empathy,  
with the sweetness,  
a little chivalry,  
grace, mercy, kindness,  
a little warmth always  
in our affections.

Keeping a little sanity in the process,  
a measure of regard,  
with equity,  
a little depth,  
slow, peaceful now, profound,  
a little joy at all times  
in our making.

Maintaining a little caution in the process,  
a little silence,  
with the splendour  
of nature a little beneficence,  
stillness, attention, meaning always,  
listening to the movement  
of the breeze.

## The Long Soft Sighing of the Tide

Over these slopes of brown furze, broken stone,  
the dolerite outcrops on the clouded hills,  
the long horizon,  
the glitter of western sea,  
you feel the phantoms moving,  
as the Amerindians moved,  
and the San, almost silent  
a part of the land,  
one with the body's liquids,  
bound in blood,  
in a world we cannot reach  
or comprehend  
the world below the dust  
sifted on hills,  
the hundred thousand generations  
gone down sighing,  
the wind and stars  
their guides.

On the far green slopes where the stones rise,  
pointing to star perhaps or moon or sun,  
in the white air,  
the gleam of shining crystal,  
you feel the phantoms move  
as aboriginal ghosts, as forest peoples,  
the sea and lakeshore dwellers moved,  
a part of this earth,  
electric with existence  
temperate in blood,  
making a world we cannot  
recreate or gather,  
the lives below the dust,  
in the sand of the seasons,  
the generations trusting in time  
space, rites of passage,  
the long soft sighing,  
of the tide.

## The Lark in Eternity, the Hawk in Time

Lark and hawk in the air,  
the one hangs against cloud  
joy in its wings,  
holds still in eternal moment  
pouring song  
the raw trills  
the pure cascade  
sends down a cone of sound  
to the slope of hill  
concealing grass  
the reservoir of the ear;  
the other sweeps through time,  
fire in its wings  
plots destruction,  
but equally *natura*,  
the flare of process  
running wild  
down past present future,  
beyond the pain  
and our morality.

The river of peace  
and the gyre of predation.  
The one hangs crystal  
in the midday heat  
its fine performance  
cold water over pebbles  
delight in mind,  
invisible source  
of a-temporal beauty;  
the other the glide  
of life over the fall,  
the tremor of blood  
beating through skies  
blind with lightning  
the presage of winds;  
both poised above us,  
one over shallow grass,  
one on the distant summit,  
poles of our being,  
in time and out of time.

## Strange Self

Once more intentionless process,  
hard by the bridge along the stream  
bright down over boulders,  
glassy slides and crystal foam,

mesmerising thought, stilling the eye  
nearly solid water framed, eternal flow;  
rapid passing on, endless remaining;  
mind fast on presence and becoming.

Eyes fixed on no flow, unutterable  
tardiness, all stands still, time ends,  
then eye goes rushing down-slope  
with the green dragon's tail, flailing.

Frozen eye, flicker of the serpent.  
Still motion, swift speeding life.  
River and stone, mind is both.  
Strange self, and all things vague.

## Almost a Clue

Here then is the silent corner I make.  
I have created my place in the grass,  
not one perhaps you will envy,  
but between those two trees  
and not far from the edge of the stream,  
it's a place of light.

It's almost as if there's a clue  
here to the imponderable earth,  
a thread, perhaps, or a fragment of sky  
that uncurls leading thought  
into the quiet and eternal  
like a secret in the secret.

Take stock: there are no wars here,  
only the memory of battles,  
no anger, no pain, only the ache  
of remorse and irretrievable dawn.  
Truth is here, and whatever of past  
illusion clings to the native heart,

and then there is love, tangle of flesh  
and spirit, sap of seasons, fire  
of the lightning flash in azure, again,  
again, and the downpour of days,  
the slow roll of thunder over the bay,  
the green of the soul-rending sea.

And there is beauty. These fields,  
these trees that hang in the air,  
these volumes of ice-cold darkness  
that flow here from aquiline hills,  
drenching the grass and flowers  
into an orb of perfumed silence.

Here is the angle beyond despair,  
but not unknowing, sealed with the real,  
as bodies are sealed with understanding,  
the blessings of closer perception,  
than which there is nothing greater,  
nothing deeper, nothing closer to air,

or the constant candescence of waters,  
or the sun's flashing arc slicing pure green,  
or this earth, dark under foot and hand,  
this growth bursting in presence, live  
by the crook of the arm, the eye's dark,  
intimate understanding of self and other.

Tell me what you will carry  
to the last breath of life, but friendship,  
but memory, but grace of the line  
the sound the landscape the resonance of space,  
in which we endure the resonance of being,  
the endless echo of this vast strangeness,

piercing the flesh like a briar, but balm  
to the mind; tell me what else you will  
hear when you die but the body's song  
reverberating all ways through the intellect,  
the song that ends in love and begins there,  
the massive sweetness; it's all here,

all here in this place,  
in this secret corner and lair of meaning.

## Wind in the Poplar

The wind in the poplar, your poplar,  
is sighing and hissing, sibilant evening  
falls slowly over the field and river.  
I listen inside me to your discrete song.

The clouds turn in the umber air,  
unravelling, forming, life coheres  
only in memory and in the making.  
I fashion inside me your ancient song.

The waves tumble in flailing foam,  
creating, destroying, meaning arises,  
out of our effort, out of our loving.  
I hear inside us the tide of your song.

## Naming the Names

Some of us end so intoxicated we can only  
keep naming names, so declaring things,  
the endless the marvellous constructs  
the worlds that owe nothing at all to us;  
are the lovers of beetles, trees, scarlet  
and emerald birds, pebbles and shells,  
drunk on the headiest natural richness.

Some end with star words, flower words,  
Arcturus and Deneb, Centaury, Burnet,  
concentrated hubs and nodes of emotion,  
we passers-through cling to furiously:  
since what else can we do but cling tight  
to this arc, this void, this chasm sliding  
so sweetly so dumbly swiftly beneath us?

Some of us fall in love with the silence;  
have you ever been there, plunged into  
that aqueous crystal where turtles swim  
and the flickering fish, or into that pond  
the child once stirred, with its horse-kicks  
of tadpoles, black lashes of stringiest life,  
more tenacious than us, more enduring?

Some can survive only there, not among  
humans, in that place where we go  
for release, for freedom from pain,  
for the intricate gathering of detail,  
an essence of meaning, for the light  
that crosses the subtle grey evening sky,  
to be simply reflection in watery echo.

For answer, deeper question, who knows  
or cares? In the end the pursuit is all,  
what fills time, aching time, and eases  
the sadness, surrounds with pale folds  
and tissues the whole intense operation,  
with delicate curlicues, layers of truth,  
which may in turn be only diverse illusion.

Some have to speak how it feels, call out,  
we insecure ones, who long for response,  
from a self or the earth, from the worlds  
that seem sleeping, or endlessly hostile,  
yet surprise us with warmth and with joy.  
It's as though we might touch that mute  
being, that solemn dumb sense in the air,

it's as though we might wake the sleeper  
there among thorns, or unravel the rose,  
or something behind the rose, still hidden;  
as if, beyond all our doubts and beliefs,  
we might name some impossible presence,  
that might make meaning for us, who are  
charged forever it seems with the making.

## Lighter

Lighter, lighter,  
the red wind stirs in the poplars,  
the lightning strikes fire,  
a gust of the endless and infinite  
picks up the world  
and tosses it over its shoulder,  
the ozone of light,  
the acetylene burn of being.  
The deutzia stirs, a pale  
enduring presence,  
she must be you,  
and the poplar I,  
forever improvising a life  
amongst those  
who cannot understand,  
or only in moments,  
while for us,  
for us it's all time,  
all space,  
and every succession of days  
a new voyage  
into the ache of the failure to comprehend.

The blue Californian ceanothus too,  
and the crimson may-thorn,  
they watch us, they gaze,  
they are distilled colour of form,  
they sing  
with a different hum, buzz  
shrilling of tone  
in the moments of brilliance,  
the zig-zag flow among trees  
of this wind from the west,  
these volumes of dark  
these clouds of unknowing,  
black night of the soul  
which is yes  
an aspect of mind,  
but due no divinity,  
godless and sweet,  
singing the flowers  
inside us,  
singing the skies  
the storms of existence  
lighter, lighter.

## Mouth

You must use the language born in you,  
not the tongues of another existence,  
though you translate  
the scorching of lips  
the lightning flash and the cool  
sweep of swallows over the lake,  
do they sip there?

You must accustom yourself (lifelong)  
to the rhythms of something native  
a level of heart  
its tendrils and arteries veins  
the tremor of air in the tops  
of the leaves and over the dark embankment,  
the thrum of the rails.

This is the beauty, these the feelings  
an essential life that endures,  
though you may interpret  
other worlds to the ear;  
the dark eel's leap in the ditch, the leavened sand  
where a patch of blood seeped  
into your consciousness.

Only emotion remains, only pain  
and the joy, nothing else,  
after galaxies collide, after we merge  
with Andromeda (call it death, or the machine)  
only then will we know  
the final, the ultimate truth,  
of the flame in the mouth.

You must speak with the music of whatever  
truth was founded inside you,  
your country, your hills, your furlongs  
of long heath and gorse,  
the black-water falls, the white  
hedges of may, the flowers blue,  
yellow and red lining the trails.

You must countenance seasons of fall,  
and the white resurrection that bursts  
from pear branches,  
clothes of the angels of mind,  
(they do not exist) you are doomed to re-echo  
all the bright thesaurus of meaning and time,  
in the recess of light.

## The Changelings

We touch many places, and people,  
and they unequally touch on us.  
And none of this is ever the same.  
We pass on, travellers, and are not  
the child in that garden imagining,  
or the lover, or worker, or whatever  
the blind mind thought it was,  
and the places are subtly altered,  
the wind that rises from marsh,  
and the shores redolent of salt,  
and the clouds, and the stream,  
they are, but not as they were.

And you too are not as I dreamed,  
moon of light, singing in silences,  
under the narrow weft of my days,  
though you are forever the unknown  
sweetness that knocks at the heart,  
demands its entry, makes me other,  
creates my alien life, my truer life,  
you too change with the breeze,  
are transformed into plant or stone,  
into tree or pool of refracted dawn.  
You and I the strange mutated forms  
of that flicker of transience, identity.

## Months Of Grace

April and September the months of pure skies,  
when the angle of sun brings the whitest cloud  
over the blue, and there is that ice in the air,  
gone or presaged.

And the hours when night is done and the moon  
flows aqueous through light to set among trees;  
April and September the months of possibilities,  
being or destruction.

The turning points, in which certainty dissolves,  
the altitudes of hill and tree, the bright disclosures,  
beginnings where pale or transcendent suns glide  
breaking the solid grey.

And the mind split open, and the life exposed, bare,  
to the considerations of the dark ruthless intellect.  
Months of a season crying mutation, you shall not  
be what you are.

April and September, mercy, peace, kindness, affection,  
also live there among harsh roots, in the derelict spaces.  
To touch them the mind must climb sky-clear mountains,  
in the months of grace.

## Mind

*'...par l'espace, l'univers me comprend et m'engloutit  
comme un point; par la pensée, je le comprends.'*

*Pascal : Pensées :113*

Nothing else for us but the mind,  
it's our science, our arts,  
deeper still it's the breath of our morality,  
the enlivening fire.

The body passes, but never the mind,  
that breaks or fades, yes,  
but leaves the forms, the bright remains  
in the house of shadow.

And the mind will migrate to the machine,  
or the machine be redefined as tissue,  
either way immortality beckons  
the finite flesh.

Nothing else is left for us but mind,  
beginning and end of space,  
there, as us, when we decode from the journey,  
from every transport.

Everything else is replaceable but mind  
in its intimate process,  
which carries inside – its own heritage,  
the lives, the millennia.

To express them as mercy, pity, peace  
and love, as ultimate grace,  
beyond the reach of illusory religions,  
the getting and spending, power.

Mind is the essence, mind our strangest future,  
intellect, ethics, beauty, truth,  
conjured by nature out of the nothingness,  
as the universe self-conjured.

But never nothing. O, I am in love with form,  
the shaping mind singing,  
the wayfarer's dream of time and eternity,  
marvellous resonance.

## What Is Solid

Though the world is all substance (hear  
the wind in the chestnut trees, above  
the scarlet trumpets of the azaleas)  
what is without purpose is also void.

Though we engage through bodies  
and not simply minds (mind a process  
of body therefore no thing, rather  
a wisp of time transcended there)

the body is emptiness unless thought  
redeems it. The houses, the rocks,  
the hills disappear, I walk in the void,  
which is the wild purposeless universe.

Substance vanishes into deeper form,  
and form is a dance of process called  
time, time the unfurling of process  
in the core of the everlasting moment.

You and I are not solid matter enduring,  
we are the ghosts and phantoms of light,  
caught in the whirlwinds of thought  
and feeling, granting meaning to life.

What crushes us is also light as a feather,  
what we drift through, a weight of gravity  
that we resist. Everything gathers round  
in the gloom, the masses of buildings, trees,

but evening sizzles, the yellow lamps flare,  
the reluctant heart beats again, lightning  
entrances once more, without power to kill  
the delight that flies in the watery darkness.

## **Bright, You Rise**

Bright, you rise from the darkness, nameless stream,  
carving your white flow over a lip of silent granite,  
vague as the past ever is, a matter of ideas, feeling  
not vision, in the eyes, which are not eyes, of mind.

I recall you, in memory's half-formed, fragile web  
of grasping, like water flashing between the fingers,  
but what registers is your uncompromising truth,  
the flame of a moth-wing beating against life's glass.

Like me, a wanderer, and baffled by all this Earth,  
your nervous flight pure as the wood-pigeon's arc,  
from under the hawk of daylight, pain and denial,  
a flash of grey gone sweet through the silent trees.

## Evening Hour

Shake off the planet, all its exhaustions,  
go down to the small green bay, the slow waves,  
shivers of evening light on polished stones,  
a hint of transcendence in the band of cloud.

Be kind to your self, and the thoughts of self,  
the web of curious memories you drag with you,  
of which the searching mind would like to make  
a whole, but cannot, endlessly lifting its own purpose

high over its head and launching itself towards future,  
in the hope that from it the meaning, the assurance  
might emerge – or is it a benediction from something  
it seeks, an exoneration, a sign of commendation

it asks of the horizon where a single vessel appears,  
dark shell against the light, spreading its silent wake,  
in interminable distance, over the surfaces of green,  
each anxious wrinkle delicate as the moth's antenna?

Let go of the planet, hug yourself. Pure night is near,  
when the clouds are rolled away and the galaxy flares,  
and we can be one with the pure all-powerful stillness,  
of multi-coloured stars, and the gaseous swirling veils.

Let go and be kind to your heart, that slight voyager,  
that counts your steps, the hours, the life, the losses.  
Consider the laughter that didn't make it here, mild  
behind the mind's grinding down of pebble to sand.

However you make your purpose and your meaning,  
know that no one before you or after will do better.  
It's enough if they fail, the far depths, to dismay you  
utterly, if you can still hide in the flower, insect, star.

## Over-World

The deep well of time, the black alleyway  
I wandered through,  
its small lighted windows, quiet workshops,  
soft laughter, happiness –  
no walking there at the edge of pain and light  
no following the cracks in ice  
where hope founders.

And at the corner a pomegranate tree,  
a bush, the pure exotic  
with hanging fruit, Persephone's fruit,  
in a bright angle, glowing slowly  
at a cafe's side-entrance,  
its mottled ripeness a six-month promise,  
the seeded pledge of the over-world.

## Self Aside

Putting self aside and the world,  
ambling down-valley,  
the mind arranges woods, hills, streams  
into patterns of understanding,  
ceases to compare itself to others,  
or its creations to life's alternatives.  
One foot in front of the other,  
a further hundred steps, then a mile,  
and landscape mutates,  
there are other rivers, mountains, trees,  
a new caress of the breeze,  
and the heart is freed,  
for its own making,  
which is the only creation  
worth the effort,  
to be unique  
in a world of non-uniqueness.

Putting self aside, which is difficult,  
climbing, descending,  
the mind constructs histories of fields,  
builds patterns of light into forms of meaning,  
ceases to interpret itself through others,  
or its feelings through another's sense.  
One foot after another, mile on mile,  
and the natural beauty,  
without demand, intent, authority,  
the slow inflow of the given  
not made, sinks deep,  
to reassure us,  
of the only perception  
worth our effort;  
to see beyond self  
in the world of conflicting selves.

## Thoughts In The Shade

The process is indestructible.  
No way to leave the way.  
No way to oppose it.  
Relax, and float with the white seeds,  
the thick cloud of crazed parachutes  
coating the spider-webs  
and the yellow gorse; gain hands of air.

It's the values inside us  
that make answer to the world,  
not the wild forces for good or ill,  
harsh stresses that create a society.  
Watching the moth dark in daylight,  
and the thin file of ants climb  
the hill of light to dissect a leaf.

Whatever is given and shared increases,  
Whatever is owned is forever fixed.  
It's the infinite against the finite thing.  
Nature is not a consciousness, that participates  
in our thought, foresight, conscience,  
eyes or heart. Azure sky  
eases the need for purpose, brings meaning.

Pale veins of the grass-blade, ruffled layers  
of cloud, all this pure being is burgeoning.  
Distinctions here so poorly understood:  
there is an order even without design,  
there is a meaning even without intent.  
See it, and the centuries drop away,  
leaving you simply naked in the sunlight.

Watch the great sieve, the vast cascade,  
hear the showering sounds in the grass.  
All the illusions of Maya, the shadows  
of the void, but these are also the real,  
in our irreality. The transient is the way.  
The flow eternal. Nature asserts no values:  
those we confer, with our hands of air.

## Forbear

Meadow flatlands      these  
are the ends of the earth  
the soft grass swaying

old stones placed on end  
perhaps by hands  
mark      the hidden universe

white perfect cloud  
    billows or is still

the sigh the sway of the grass like  
    speech      the message  
deep down in us somewhere

flows      what we loved and love  
sweeps up life, holds life there  
an instant      gleaming

Meadow flatlands  
these the sacred spaces  
kill the idling engines      forbear

## Crossing The City

Architecture too has a secret.  
Uncomfortable with what we make  
that shows only power,  
I like the buildings  
that reveal a mind.

Concrete and steel are mindless.  
'Statements' are shallow;  
stone and wood are of earth  
and reveal its beauty;  
ruins are ours.

Here the massive domes, the facades,  
great steps to belittle us,  
blank spaces to fill voids with void,  
no seats, vast squares;  
the universe, the planet, bears down

Grass waves in my mind  
I wander through  
no longer finding anything within  
that still endorses all this weight  
for what it brings us

Wrong step a whole civilisation  
founders, the arrow fired  
aimlessly falls in the stream:  
I search for the un-made  
in this cold place

the un-designed, the richness  
we were born to. Grass  
waves in my mind;  
I wait for night's  
chance glimpse of galaxies.

## We Are Buried Deep

No, there's nothing you have I want.  
Give and share  
that I'll understand.  
Those who owned it all,  
dust underfoot in the air  
(Alexander's Caesar's Napoleon's Hitler's  
Stalin's, Mao's breath still going round,  
those molecules, the protons in free fall forever)  
own nothing.  
Power is empty.

Snow covers the dreaming land,  
the wind is still,  
and here is every peace.  
Where are we going  
in this universe,  
(with Pascal I can grasp it, but it's nothing,  
infinite void seething with all potentials,  
what he looked for was non-existent purpose)  
and why?  
First set Earth free.

All the sad stones of empire down there.  
Who knows what's  
underground, glowing  
unseen in the darkness?  
Snow is light,  
(Conceal with a veil what we have done,  
what we have been, except for the gleams  
of humanity, still emerging, celebrate those)  
snow hides our past.  
We are buried deep.

## **Distant Friend**

Wandering again in grass  
the butterflies fluttering  
their wisps of wings in air  
go covering the meadows,  
and the mind a moth follows  
lighter than moon and star,  
towards the distant hills.

Friendship a wild flicker  
of a far-off lamp in silence,  
a warmth in the midnight air,  
soothes, energises,  
and friendship too has wings,  
sings in the darkness,  
free mind to mind.

The moonlit slopes are white  
a dim sheen veiled glowing,  
the deep black undergrowth  
creates the planet over again,  
and friendship too, its maps  
are new, it shines in stillness,  
even though you are not here.

## Mountain Truth

On shattered rim-rock and shale,  
broken edge of the wild uplands.  
Rising sun in fog, the firs in light  
glow greener than greenest seas.

All things ease down, all working  
becomes the maturation of moths,  
the infinitesimal moves of seeds,  
the mutating angles of the mind.

Birds and a few mice, in the grass,  
at the fringe of the bands of stone.  
Skies are incandescent, ferns grace  
black shards of cliff, streams flow.

Here we lose the illusions that bind.  
Loosed and flowing, frozen time.  
The ball of light, mountain truth.  
Falling slower, sinking deeper.

## Thoughts For A Rainy Day

Action or inaction, what's your choice?  
Toss a pebble into the silent pool  
and hope for minimum destruction,  
or drift with the light, the grass,  
the wandering stream, savaged  
by conscience.

Ways of life are no help: one is all  
action; if not of the body, of mind  
and emotions; it's forever for others:  
submerging the self in selflessness,  
become society, brother/sisterhood,  
die of species.

Another dissolves the self in void,  
embraces an ultimate non-action,  
transcends the self in states of self,  
becomes the one alone, or the one  
is all, vanishes into the non-distance,  
seeks non-self.

Often the same creed will embrace  
both action and non-action, a deep  
inner tension in all forms of spirit,  
between the worlds inside and out,  
our penalty for existing in the unreal,  
not fish or fowl.

Many forms of action are forms  
of power, and all power is empty.  
Many forms of inaction are equally  
manifestations of greed, fear, desire,  
anxiety, opposition, competition,  
neutral power.

Giving up power without relinquishing humanity is hard, embracing it without losing humanity in action is impossible. Those forms of action devoid of power are personal, creative: love, art, for example, both difficult.

The source of all ethics and morality, is the choice between action and inaction, where every form of action has unforeseen consequences, many are not benign, where even non-action is a form of action by default.

To interfere, to intervene in helpful ways, to detach oneself from selfish power, to find a road between action and inaction, exhibiting compassion, but refraining from driving the world in ways not understood, is hard.

Pity the species. Pity the naked self.

## Rationale

You write because the world disturbs you in the deepest way. Because time is short and eternity is long, and the spirit would find its place. Because nature is now no longer enough if it ever was, and our artifice not only disappoints, it troubles in subtle or not so subtle ways.

You write because there is beauty buried in matter and form and it seems to emerge just beneath your fingers or under your eyelids, in the deep communion – days pass like minutes. Because you feel you don't exist unless you shout, cry, scream in the infinite silence forever surrounds.

You write because it's a form of love, a way of comprehending the beloved. You write because you wish to be river, stone, tree, flower, insect, cloud, light. Because it's the sweetest way to pass the hours, woven dew-wet spider-webs over the impenetrable thickets of gorse.

You write to free what is otherwise imprisoned, in a narrow concrete cell; to try to communicate with the other that never responds, or not in the way desired. You write because it is action and not inaction, but non-action devoid of power. Because it makes you weep.

You write for ever, for every generation, what is encapsulated in just this one time and place, because humankind is itself a story, and its dreams, hopes, acts, desires; and all of us seek a story. Because we are lost in the immensity of the void, and the spirit would somehow find its place.

## Walk

Down the green road along the hedgerow,  
a buried ditch, two goats feeding.  
Over a stile, and up through abandoned quarries  
to reach the hill-fort's piles of shattered stone.

Finding a way even over a mapped landscape  
frees the spirit. It's a path back into nature,  
into the world we long ago abandoned,  
and it sweetens our exile here in modernity.

White clouds from the sea shadow the moor.  
Has the stone you grasp rolled from the past,  
or yesterday's outfall? New or old, still cast  
from million-year deep shelves of gone seas.

There's the drop into secret folds of a dark hill,  
and the climb, in scent of the sea, towards fields  
deep in the waves of imminent harvest. There's  
a lane, a wall, a gully drenched in wild-flowers.

Then there's a place to stand, in alien country,  
which is always the heart's renewal, freedom  
from habits of eye and ear. The lark's up high,  
unseen in the blue. Its wings still fold in joy.

## The Mouths Of Time

It's a question of feeling  
the quality of your own mind,  
I see that.  
Invention and description  
are not enough  
for the burning heart.  
Perhaps you're the glow itself  
of the midnight moon  
silhouetting  
the poplar and the ploughshare,  
the broken wall  
its deeper shadows.  
Perhaps you're the night,  
deep night,  
where the galaxy arches,  
and the eye  
makes everything vast  
everything tiny.  
Perhaps you are other,  
mirror shattered crazed in the other,  
all that is not reflection,  
refraction,  
all that is the world itself  
breaking in from outside  
to declare you absent,  
shredding your spirit as you shred  
the wisps of dried leaf and flower  
in the field,  
by the river in early light  
where you'd sleep forever.

It's about grasping the feel  
of a movement elusive,  
in hours, I see that.  
Perhaps you're the shape  
on the fiery scent of a hill,  
the ice of its thorn-tree  
that renews,  
the crackle of lightening,  
the vicious veil  
of misted rain blasting the slope.  
Perhaps you're the dance  
of the bitter leaves,  
of sombre cloud  
the green blades of dawn and dusk.  
Perhaps you're the nebula,  
whorl of silver,  
the concentration of mass.  
Perhaps, not the field,  
or the soil below,  
you're the silence buried,  
where no one cries,  
at the mute heart of the earth.  
Perhaps you're the air,  
that sighs and showers seed softly  
the detritus of days  
of the heavy sun,  
a darkness of cedars,  
of nightshade,  
the purple mouths  
of time.

## Returning

Returning always to the way,  
which is nowhere,  
and nothing.

A play of light on water,  
an ongoing  
movement of leaves,  
we are always part of.

Even the solitudes  
are imaginary.  
Air is no vacuum,  
thought is time.

And meaning  
is in nature,  
out of mind,  
always singing.

Always the singing dying  
resurrecting land,  
and the marks of  
our passing.

Returning always to the way.

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