

# **Dark Matter**

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## Dark Matter

Below the mind lurks the creative mind, unseen dark matter,  
To which the galaxies and bright stars of poesy are glued.  
Or perhaps a river, that throws out alien objects in its flow.

You have to live long enough to be ready for its any given  
Influence, although at times an icy tip will emerge, rolling  
From under, and its green caves turn, glittering in the light,

Then sink back into silence, into the dark of midnight floes.  
It's an ocean too, or this field of hidden insects, birds, seeds.  
Now and then comes a sudden flurry of flight. Now and then,

The world is streaked with lightning and the heavens crackle.  
The darkness matters. The conscious mind, never skilled enough,  
Fashions out of light, but the universe itself rests on blackness.

And no dark god. The veils of colour agitate on a snowy evening,  
But not for us. There's a greater moving on of immaculate things,  
In an intimacy of fields, forces, energy's particular manifestations,

Objects we love, and places, as well as the fists of flame in the dark.  
Tonight, I sit and think. Tonight I create the world of make-believe,  
Fragile in air and evening. Winds of the pure creation tranquil blow.

Yes, sometimes before we're ready a curious peak, or blade, or fin  
Of solid matter, dark out of sea-scoured ice will rear its head, ugly  
Or beautiful at its own un-will, its own blue non-intent, to glitter,

In an uncanny silence. That will be presage perhaps of future cliffs,  
Cavernous grottoes through which a winter sun gleams over waves.  
That will be prophecy of white levels, noon shadows, mist-less stars.

But not for us to predict. The sea of light has its own underpinning,  
As the motion of these lines was not counted out on the fingers, nor  
Predictable from any conscious moment of a life, my life, they flow

From a place not to be looked at too closely. Like a man sitting calm  
In a silent place, whose private thoughts and being will not be yours.  
Below this mind's the creative mind, with its own language, tongued

In delighted rhythms of the starlight, only ours because it emerges  
From what is us, from the lake and mirror, in the watery frill, echo,  
And murmuring edge of meaning. It can never be ours in otherwise.

Is ours because we dare to sit so silent and be overtaken by words,  
By the up-thrust, the snout, the fluke, the skirmish of the summoned,  
Yet there's no Sibyl in the cave. Smoke curls round the empty tripod.

Babble of metaphors. The dark knots of matter move the galaxies; we  
Cohere. Somehow form rises, structure and not as intended, somehow  
The strings of the darkness utter, so gold and blue and red shall rotate.

A daybreak, the twilight, almost one, create a landscape of pyramidal  
White, but light is fractured at the prism, and the arch scales the dark,  
Till an unknown, as lingering as smoke, waves over the rim of horizon.

## A Figure Seated In The Twilight

It's simply a private man in a private place, facing  
The universe, in a hidden communion with the self,

An unmediated presence. The child was silent,  
And could see a mountain in the air, in another

Age of the world, or that panoply of characters,  
On the green grass under lucent everyday stars;

Now the man must wait for imagination to begin:  
He is pleased with the movement of water and air.

Here he is most himself. Isn't it then as Leonardo  
Said? Most oneself without the noisy companions:

And yet, the gleams and ghosts in the painting, yet  
The magical watery curls, and the pools among rock,

Are evidence, if we needed evidence, we are never  
Solely here, mainly a part of whatever exchanges live

In the stillness between our lives, in those canyons  
Between minds, else how I could speak to you,

How could we build ramparts of time in the wind  
In which our private thoughts turn to public flares?

## After The Flurry, Under The Moon

A creak of light on the snow.  
From the open door, a shower of stars  
That street-lights dim:  
But visible to the spirit,  
Though city glows  
Like a nuclear after-fall,  
On a bare sea.

Down the slopes of light  
The constellations slide, the forms  
Tenuous again,  
But meaningful to the mind,  
Though myth dark  
As a fading manuscript  
Is a fragile flower.

In the far blue the moon  
Climbs heaven without its gods;  
Such illusions fail,  
Though seductive to the heart.  
Step out, through the tracks  
Of creature into coldness,  
Breathe this air!

It's as though it blew  
From a mountain of the past,  
Carrying off your loves,  
Lives and emotions,  
Though self is still here,  
Poor and small,  
In deeper darkness, witnessing light.

## March Winds

Our world intensifies in morality, in its sensitivity  
To slight. There's a glitter, in the spirit, opposing  
The conflicts and the denigrations; it's a valuing  
Of the creature and the creatures, in compassion.

It is what I feel for you, how you feel for me.  
The quandary, how to move from the private  
To the public, how to transform the Earth,  
Before we take our history to the stars.

It's a springtime of the species, hidden in winter's  
Last awful passing. Hope alive in the branches.  
The shattered rims of the dark alive with cold  
Yet held out as an offering in splintered hands.

It's the sensitivity to all beauty; the inner rejection  
Of all violence; the refusal to pay lip-service,  
It's the service of the lips. We have built a shelter  
From the fragments, remains of Orpheus's song.

Slowly understanding deepens among the realms  
Of understanding. An idealism unfolds. A hidden  
Flow of light sings under the world, more silently:  
The denials once accepted are no longer acceptable.

The snow, the ice, the rain are crying for the lost  
Phantoms of the dream, these nations, races, faiths,  
Their ghostly foolishness, their trade in transience,  
All the nonsense indulged in fantasy, loathed in truth.

The scenery of the past is gone, its after-trail lingers.  
Now there's a region to find without the mythology,  
Though with myth's resonance. New speech, a flame  
Of the infant dawn around the nascent emerging sun,

Beyond the cry of day being born to wintering Time,  
The scream of merciless Poesy in the moorland wind,  
Beyond the desire for speech; in the calm beginning  
Of the small stream unfreezing in its platter of leaves.

Which is the gentlest stir of feeling, of pity, in the mind,  
The strong moves of a morality proven against the poles,  
Against arctic drift, the face of the icefall where we cling,  
The cornice of power, the dark blizzard of non-meaning.

At the end of winter the solid melts, nothingness fractures,  
The health of the ground trembles in a breeze from the west,  
Falls ease a cased restriction; the root in the rock breathes;  
Pebbles shift eerily; the hawk re-appears in the utter blue.

We are re-born. What if life was never re-born, generation  
Clogging generation; if the old givens were never destroyed,  
And the ritual, sham, cant, trappings, and titular nonsense bred  
Till the end of days! What hope then for the ghostly phantoms?

But now the iceman drips, the snowman collapses on itself,  
The fingers of glittering gold and blue grasp air, and dissever,  
There's a glance, a touch breaks through the formal language,  
Revivifies the tongue and warms the humanity in the human.

The frozen winter of history was all the time in eternity. These  
Are spirits which, encapsulated in mind, grant strength to being;  
These are spirits shining out of winter trees, ruffling the water,  
Minds not mine, climbing the seed-pods, skimming the wheat.

The un-power of compassion is gaining, now the dark soil sighs,  
The shadow of summer compounds itself out of the green bud,  
And the houses are not houses they are the gates of our dreams,  
The streets are not streets they are the tracks of our imagination.

No prophecies. Our world intensifies in the moral, which is our  
Future. Every life valued, every feeling, every creature, every  
Blade of grass, each tree and hedge, every core of every flower,  
Valued. Here in this spring, here silent, in a shimmering of light.

## Considering An Index Of First Lines

Reading the first poems one imagined alternative futures.  
How the poet might evade the traps, like a salmon high  
In the air as it leaps the weir, under a slope of sandstone.

The tightness, the nothing-to-lose ecstasy of the language,  
As it rounds on the tongue, like a cold pebble sucked wet  
From the stream; a miraculous freshness of new metaphor.

Later the poem becomes the poet, the poet the trail of poems.  
As the painter left part of himself on each canvas to find self,  
And lose himself again, in a flicker of blue, in yellow layers.

Then imagination hardens, not away from beauty, but into self,  
The casing that defines us, the outline of a life and a meaning,  
In a universe free of meaning, but filled with delicate shapes.

Reading the early work now the future is obvious, was it then?  
Could personality resist intelligence, could fame fail to corrupt?  
Did he look backward, forward, was there development, design;

Or did self overtake self, and the inner unfolding take place there  
In the place of the mind which is within the space of our thoughts,  
Until he became what he was, a speaker of new things out of old,

A magician of the colloquial tune, concealed so carefully, behind  
The curtain of a changed convention? He empowered the tongue.  
He reiterated what the personified Muse repeats to each generation:

The essence of being, to take ownership of self and that thought  
Which comes out of self, is self; if self, that is, is anything at all;  
To bear witness, to love and death, of which there are many forms.

Reading the first poems one fails to imagine the arc of his creation,  
Yet knows it wholly, so the latter verse simply echoes the former,  
As the evening sun might evoke the sun at dawn, in opposing skies;

So that it is fulfilment, even if only fragments survive; in each leaf  
The whole tree is exemplified, and the greater is there in the lesser,  
Whatever comparison means; where every vein writes its signature.

## Moor-Deep

It was a cone of flame, a shaft, a fall. Now it's a glittering,  
To express the fragmentation: a shattered cry like the cry  
Of the air when it shifts over the moor, in landscape filled  
With absence, intermittence; with forms of exit and stone.

Carved in the heights, bits and pieces of the constellations  
Gather above, though we lose most of the individual names.  
They triangulate our grief or joy that concerns all this world,  
Though it's an effort to redeem ourselves simply in the local.

The place is far from the phantoms, is heather, gorse, bracken  
And thorn, that blowing tree and the child swaying inside it,  
A deep honeyed cave, a pit of escape, the lulling, the dreaming,  
At the far extreme of the mind where our thoughts in time begin.

The weather sculptured its backbone and its limbs of extenuation.  
Grit-sharpened black-stone measured by tides of season and star,  
Until it was reduced to this ancient essence, an eternal landscape,  
Which bears us; kills us; then sings to us, caressingly, in between.

The light, especially the light, was broken into pieces by the wind:  
Here a few sheep grazed; there a single tree was shaped to the east,  
Like a flow of wave. What had once been the great outpouring, fire  
And colour dazzling in the Vision, shone now with subtler contours.

Drama gave way to a deeper compassion, as the light's underpinned  
By a darker mass, whose energy acts as gravity and not illumination.  
And though what shines is beautiful to us, what holds it all together  
May be the absence of radiance, now, a fabric of mercy in the bone.

## A Portable Inferno

I thought I'd escaped the moor, aware though  
Of the dark mass drawing me, sighing,  
As it once summoned the imagination, the great  
Poem of the heart; a region, its field;  
Though this place was none of my ancestry;  
Here, was the unfamiliar space, brazen and mighty.

I thought its battering ram of mindless unreason;  
The emotion I feared, and fear; the swell  
Of its storms swiftly transforming the day;  
The sweep of its shapes stretching to all horizons;  
Could be suppressed and unknown,  
That its weather needs be no part of the mind,

And its own self not part of this self, merely  
Through some happenstance of location,  
Some quirk of language, though not my speech,  
And a raw and generous avowal, not my avowal.  
I thought it would be overlaid, all that origin,  
Neither here nor there in the course of things.

Time surprises. The river runs always from a dark  
Buried under some rock, layered in some deep level,  
And we are never clear of anything; always here,  
Where we were before, and discovering form  
In the seeming shapeless, in the eye of the gale,  
Or buried in the heath, among soundless scents.

I thought I had left the darkness behind, longing  
For light, for the huge civilising glow and its soft  
Kind shadows, needing their solace and its comfort,  
Though I walked the reservoirs, climbed hills, looked  
Over the windblown water, felt the dam tense at dawn,  
Lowering over the valley, defining 'strong'.

Tonight the mind is filled with the sight and scenery  
Of my dead, the haunting of another age and my age,  
My last century, gone to enter this century,  
And the century before, conjuring their spirits,  
Which it seems are also my spirits whirled in the wind,  
Of which one spoke to the poet, the other was silent.

## A Stirring Of Leaves

The shriek of leaves in this wildness of trees,  
And its mystery mimics the transient breeze  
In moving my feeling from place to place,  
Like the flickers of thought on a loved face.

A motion of time in the motion of being,  
Deeper than knowing, touching; seeing  
The whole in the feature, far and deep  
On the surface of light, mind un-asleep.

Till we almost believe that life is one,  
And empathy reaches down to the bone,  
And no island exists where all are isles,  
Chained by sorrows, connected by smiles.

## Exhortation To The Self-Inventors

Now then begin again, each day seeing it new.  
The vigour can never be nothingness, the flame  
Is always ghostly ashes. Everything dies everything  
Resurrects, like the snowdrops, concentrate on that,

And how the new sun makes spring out of the wind.  
I am speaking of mind, the unreal, and only vaguely  
Of the other. This is not science, which only sings  
The myth of the outer spaces, explains the forms

Of the inner. But what the mind produces is never  
Solely what mind is. All thought is unpredictable,  
Like your beauty. Yes, I am talking to you, to mine,  
To the past, to the dark essence of our ghostly trade.

Not what we are but what we make of it all, what we  
Do. And not our words, which can only ever be signs,  
Like the flags and pyramids of colour in a Paul Klee  
Painting, which always point to Paul. We are names,

But what else, greater than names. How do we escape  
Them, escape the forms, transmute ourselves to spirit?  
That's why religion fails because it imprisons the soul,  
Which is the free individual in every woman and man,

In all who are neither, all who are both, all who refuse  
To endorse a plan for pain, or a mask of final intention;  
Who would rather face truths, and the sweet darkness  
Which blows over all, through all, and will all eternity.

Now we begin again, but not with infantile pleasure,  
Though pleasure matters, and with the deeper knowing.  
A heroism indeed for modern times, as the poet declares  
From his ornate tomb on which Melancholia sits musing.

There is a flash of gold light on the covering of snowfall.  
There is a melt going on under the seemingly frozen world.  
Though we spend our time on the tyrants, recidivists, loud  
Howlers of faiths, there is some river deeper flowing below.

There is a white trickle of life in a corner of being, and those  
Giacometti hands at the figures' sides like leaves, like blades,  
Like shovels, are ready to lift the enormous burden of all this.  
They lean forward into the wind, they gesture towards the sky.

Now then begin again each day seeing it new. It moves  
Like a runnel and also rests like a pool. It's dark like the Tao,  
*Hsuan*, black as lacquer, the energy inherent and the going on.  
You must re-invent existence. Do, as Ezra said: 'Make it new.'

## Sun On Stone

The sun on stone, the first green leaves, are spring, yes,  
But it's the specific that the names can't communicate,  
As I sit here in a patch of heat looking through the glass  
And feeling the whole of this Earth flowing around me.

It was always the world of nature, the earth in eternity  
That interested me and not the world of others, though  
I function there. It seems always the being face to face  
With the universe that matters, not the blind everyday.

That's never easy, to be the artist, be the poet, focussed  
On the art, the act of creation, besides which every other  
Consideration vanishes, and we disabused of false gods.  
The true god is to explore the self, more and more deeply.

The true god, if there were gods, which there are not, is  
To penetrate the question more and more fully, and not  
Of course the answer, as there is no answer, and as our  
Question is never complete, that's why the sculptor runs

On endlessly with a series, on what seems an identical  
Theme, or a painter: the poet less easily forms himself  
And yet is defined in almost every word, every nuance,  
Every tone, rhythm to which he returns. We call it style,

But it's the essence of the maker. It's the breath of black,  
The silver darkness, the green stars shining over the sea,  
In the wet and luminous dawn, it's the vision, inwardly.  
It's levelled ground on which a single mind is founded.

We obscure ourselves with meaningless talk, the chatter  
Over creativity, and yet there's a communion of makers,  
Who whether they realise it or not participate in the one  
Rite, which exists in no known religion, not even Delphic.

We obscure our spirit, our soul (an archaic name for mind),  
By speaking of the magic, the miracle of the unconscious:  
Magic, because we don't see how it's done, don't wish to;  
Miracle, because without it how can we godless be blessed?

But in the light comes the gift of the light, the green stalk of  
The seed, the sun in the glass. You pick it up like bright paper  
That unfolds, to reveal a life, you become a seethe, influences,  
A host moves through you, the *Sidh* with their windblown hair.

Then nothing. They fade. Once more you simply confront this  
Universe, shining; and must do so in almost prosaic terms lest  
Style comes between the maker and what is made, the speaker  
And our message, which is never a message, merely our destiny.

## Light On The Lake

Light breathes through all the trees, and glitters on holly,  
Where every leaf's a mirror, containing the marvellous,  
Flash of time in fire, and the advent of brilliant Spring.

The sunlight on the water is both flowing and still. We  
Are fixed on the poles of being and becoming. The eye  
Of reality stares into us, becomes the unreal, a moment

Of mind. What we are, why the self is never determined  
By how the mind works. Since some part of its content  
Comes from beyond, merges with inside, is transformed,

To emerge as process and product, or thought and ideal,  
In which the complexities of what derives from outside  
Are part of the plot; as the data may reorient the program.

The sun on the water's a glitter of diamonds, eye is torn  
Between the cool dark stillness at the far end of the lake,  
And this fling of ecstasy; the line of trunks, the fulgent.

Flowing and still: the jewels on the surface, yet that fall  
Of light, an unwavering glow deep down in the muteness,  
So contradicts itself. We are both, we are lightest mind.

## Dale

Mind's in the winter dale, fording a limestone stream,  
Wandering between green under frost, like present  
Over past. Boots, pack, in sunlight, in the hollows.  
The immense freedom of life, human constriction

Are what I consider, sitting here, but heart's there,  
Where three worn hills smooth as sand dunes pass  
From foreground to horizon, bare grass and stone,  
And have names that will not be remembered now.

Tremor and shiver of ice-cold and glittering on-flow,  
Dark water that gave its river a name in ancient tongue,  
No pebbles under a deep black singing; dale of the mind,  
Where nothing's determined of what the human must be,

Everything is open to our affection, touch of our loyalty,  
A gathering of love that interpenetrates all these systems,  
Knits all this variance of life and non-life into the beauty  
That we sanction; our gifts to the universe. What we are,

Beyond the foolishness we perpetrate, the only worth, best  
Value of us, our makings out of love and for beauty's sake:  
Which includes you, my love, which forever involves you.

## The Underlier

He felt all being a lightest rime of frost. Slender as a figure  
Of tin he passed transparent through this world of shadows,  
Like a puff of breath on a darkening stair, like some vaguest  
Contraction of a sigh. He was hardly the region or its angel,  
More a possibility of presence, wavering, then quickly gone.

He was like the figure at the angle of the window in the scene,  
In a dark picture, there in camera; a shape that passes in trees,  
That inhabits the alley, within the green and grey; he was like  
The one desired, never to be seen reflected in the glass again;  
He scattered like a fragrance, even as he penetrated the walls.

Momentary stars back-grounded him, but not as some radiance,  
Not as the spectre on the mist, he was more delicate than Ariel,  
He was water, written on air. He was like a bell-note echoing  
With departure. He was not defined by the world of humanity.  
But was no phantom from some other world. What other world?

He sang. It was a gasp of light, dissoluble, too far to be known,  
But a harmony and a cry of sorts. It concerned those spaces he  
Could not express, except through this space: this spurt of mist,  
Taking form in a mouth. He found it difficult to achieve being.  
It was not his forte. He was more comfortable among shadows.

He did not come bearing a message, nor even identity; an illusion  
Perhaps, as perishable as old film, or as the meaning of whatever  
We no longer love. He was sound going away, an unseen logician  
Of absence. He might have had the look of a marble statue chill  
On the steps of an unlit garden, or of the blackbird after its song.

He came as light on the water, and left no trace; planetary vibration,  
Detected somewhere by the amphibian creeping closer into its mud.  
He is the signifier of our being and our fate. Nothing as solid as self,  
He slips between pages of our books, between smoke, dust in the air,  
Yet is nearer to us than our own thoughts; or deeper in the darkness.

## Road-Kill

Road-kill sleeps by the road. I would like to think of the small  
And defenceless sleeping, though sad mind knows otherwise.  
This is a world where the powerless are mown by the wheels.  
Yet power is empty. We never learned how to harness power.

The logging trucks go ploughing up the places that I admired,  
Yesterday; the delicate patina of mosses, twigs and ferns; mud  
Now. Yes, life will recover, maybe. Nature, after a fashion,  
She who does not exist: all, we say, is matter for us to change.

The dead fox lies by the road, the badger-corpse, the pigeons,  
And the hawk, the fallow deer, the thousand mice and worms.  
Sentiment we think is a flaw that harms us: why? In private  
Lives we are tender, we care for the small, the underprivileged,

Then evade ourselves in public, in the camaraderie of transience.  
I would like to think we could get beyond, and not by engineering,  
But by a re-valuation of values, and not what Nietzsche meant.  
Shakespeare's blind mole is right, those insects under our feet;

Extreme non-violence. Tried: we tried everything, stuck to nothing  
Long where public life's concerned, but greed and fear, science our  
Curiosity's part-assuager, art our solace: yet somehow the morality  
Creeps through, somehow rightness permeates the irrational mind,

And I can't pass road-kill without shuddering, sad for the harmless,  
Grieving for the self: that deep distaste for reality inside the unreal.  
You don't feel it? Your prerogative: I feel. Something bleeds in me,  
And bleeds endlessly, while the low sun reddens in the western air.

## Far Shores

You're far off, on the other side of the world, and we've never met,  
Friend. The warmth spins with the globe and connects our entrails.

Torch-bearers, it's the defence we build. Against dark matters, against  
The betrayal of everything human by the inhuman, monstrous forces.

'Getting and spending we lay waste our powers': Wordsworth; never  
My favourite poet, true; but that's truth, and worth the understanding.

You and I have other business, friend. We are traders in the commodity  
Of mind which comes in rare shapes and sizes. Its bales are awkward,

And we refuse slave labour except by ourselves, paid labour except  
For the wage of gratitude we pay those selves, the pleasure of creation.

Since everything is creation done for the love and not the foolishness.  
Everything is creation that is spun from quiet hearts musing in the dark.

It is dark where you are, light where I am, no metaphor. Soon otherwise.  
The great blue planet turns, progresses in its orbit, moves with its sun.

Mind is our sun and substance, and our trade. We freight our vessels deep,  
We set sail; we carry the perfume and the ambergris; we touch far shores.

## Heimat

Over the cliff ledge the rattle of antlers  
As the deer go down the hill,  
In stately progress.  
There's a salt lick  
Further down.

Marvellous contact.  
A lick of the earth,  
To remind us, all,  
All species,  
Where we come from.

## **One Last Look**

One last look at the stars before saying goodnight.  
I wouldn't wish it on us but, by their light,  
Should we return to the universe, we'll become  
The man in the wind, the woman in the moon,

So one last look at the stars before saying goodbye,  
And a second breath of the silence in the sky.  
I wouldn't wish it on you, yet here, tonight,  
Their infinite quietude seems our birthright.

## The Walker In The Dead Of Winter

His was a ghost whisper, reconciling us to ice and cold,  
The wintry trees on the promenade, a bone-deep frost,  
And a clarity dangerously close to enervation, too near  
To dissociation, to detachment from the un-detachable.

The fact that there is nothing of us beyond is simply true.  
The kind and beautiful are in us, our gifts, the creatures',  
And therefore absence, emptiness, is a slant of perception,  
Since the perception is ours to choose, life or death.

Poetry is the final seduction; can convince the rhythmic  
Mind of abolished gods, and a vocabulary of lost domains;  
Is an incantation, always capable of swaying the initiate.  
His voice rose and fell like the cold waves of an ebbing sea.

One must love truth a little to agonise over that being seduced.  
Charm is not sufficient, though we all wish we had a little more,  
And a little less fear and hatred. Charm is not enough, it needs  
A permanent dialogue invisible but recognised going on beneath.

His winter walk was deep enough aspect of the solitude we feel,  
The loneliness; Pascal's as he gazed outwards, or Baudelaire's.  
The tension we feel, in knowing his, is whether the beauty helps  
Or hinders, whether the pain we feel is a medicine or a poison.

The ambivalence of the tin man in the darkness, is our uncertain  
Musing on the far cerulean glittering, those points of fire and time,  
Despite a personal warmth undeclared no doubt, because unseen,  
Art being the creation of the possible, and rarely the work desired.

A tin man in a wind-blown scene dwindling in dazzling glow he is  
Turning and waving, or turning and being waved by a far motion,  
But at the core of the dissipating light is the creator, a man himself,  
Always more than the actor in the space of our ungrateful yearning.

## The Sleeper

Whose mind do you lie down with  
To sleep at night? If you can sleep.  
We need to lie down with each other,  
In protest at the darkening spaces,  
Otherwise what is there to sing of?

Whose heart do you unpick at night  
When you sleep? Is it Self or Other,  
The Phantom or the Spirit, neither?  
We have to invest in what we love,  
In protest at the darkening spaces.  
It's unimportant if we or it survive,  
Otherwise what is there to dream of?

Whose body do you lie down to sleep  
In at night? In the unreal, here, the flesh,  
Is it the Phantom's or the Spirit's, either?  
We need to lie down with each other,  
And invest forever in what we love.

## Contemplating The Salvation Of Freedom

It's an individual singing. Along the pale side-streets  
In the sunlit wind, and in spite of the stone facades.  
Something delicate resists. Few in time go willingly  
Into what the world prescribes for them as the future,  
Though there is pretence. The forces work their way  
Deep through the construct of what we consider free.

Freedom is more an individual singing. Not merely  
The choice to follow, or to lead; or the discretionary  
Forms and loyalties; rather dissolution of our belief  
Except in our moving out beyond the world, in free  
Association with those unspoken elements of mind,  
Best unspoken, tracing out unseasonable affections.

So the individual sound modulates in spring evening,  
Carols an instinct of which we own many, fluctuation  
In our site of being. Without it, outer world is nothing.  
Those achievements of the species not advancements,  
But decoration of a space, the vibration of a universe  
We call time, marking a century in ghostly characters.

An individual singing. As though the wind which sings  
Spoke of its own nothingness, a clear lack of substance,  
In a perfect absence of meaning, which is its far purity,  
Exemplified in long dark scouring of the mountainside,  
A churning of empty light. Why do we find it beautiful,  
This strength, in which there is nothing left of us at all?

Along the main street where freedom goes, and forms  
Are abolished, mannequins in the windows no longer  
Salute odd fashions of acceptance; tear off their uniforms;  
Being is less a habit than a mystery, not in its working,  
But in its substance. In the wind-swirled litter of the past,  
Where light rings through the outstretched human form.

## The Nameless Ones

It is our task to repossess the words, to re-create them,  
To liberate them from the mouths of these rhetoricians,  
To purify them of rite, to dissolve their cant, to redeem  
The speech that renders us human, grants us complexity.

It is our sacred duty to make sacred mean what we wish,  
The things we carry breathless in our hands, bend down  
To touch and kiss. Our role to speak the secular sacrament,  
Which frees the body and liberates the spirit, both in mind.

It is our moment, our instant in history, to cry the human,  
Beyond the last, perverse institution; our work to abolish  
The fatal given, for the sake of the great gift from outside,  
The veils of light decking the universe, the nameless ones.

## The Glass Man

Each glistening thread and bulbous dome  
Is an arc of light; the glass man on the shelf  
Throws brittle arms skyward, his heart, also  
Glass, refracts prismatic rays of existence.

What penetrates him is blue as snow, blood-red  
At sunset, yellow in patches, black as midnight.  
Green leaves from swaying trees equally there  
Make emerald, malachite, verdigris of his being.

Light trickles down, flows through the waterfall,  
The blobs of him dripped into the open hands  
Which are raised but not I think in supplication,  
More in an outward yearning, clasping the stars

That, in seven points of light, hang in the north,  
And point nowhere. They shine into his innards.  
Translucent: what goes through is only partially  
Modified, there is refraction, but impermanence.

His hands cannot hold his body, but something  
Contracts the silicate towards itself in agonies,  
Which are mere matter. The gleam illusory will  
Deceive the eye into half-perception of motion,

But no one moves. The shelf's below the window.  
The dust in the air vacillates beyond his visage,  
Which is a sightless delicacy of slippery surface,  
A nodule of fragile brightness, coruscating also.

He has no devoured knowledge, nothing learnt.  
He is a mirror into which he cannot look, a lake  
Inside which he cannot linger except mindlessly.  
He has to do with a presence of borrowed form,

Which is a denial of person, in a contradiction.  
He has no voice, only whispers of air in a room  
Caressing its exclusion. His solid is frail, a mass  
Of transient permanence, in a refusal to dissipate.

In being he is silvery or bluish absence, he is  
Breakable in-substance, incorporating others'  
Reality, himself unreal. His hardness is false,  
His weakness evident. He has indistinct feet

Which melt into what upholds him. His limbs  
Are branches of material smoothness, polished  
By process. He is sand of the sea and is ocean,  
A lens magnifying the march of hour on hour.

The weather flows through his submerged deeps,  
There are clouds, something flies, something  
Else is hurled. Moons fall into the heart of him.  
The physical Earth is the globe of his shoulder.

Without compassion he speaks of compassion.  
Without desires, embodies a desire or despair.  
He rests in a morning or an evening solitary,  
As an image. As such has life, can be breathed.

There is a fantasy perhaps includes him, a play.  
In which he is hero, to be shattered, or a god set  
In a dark penumbra, waiting for fire-shine, glow  
Of flame entering a core of frozen performance.

There is no warmth in him, you'd say. Calm,  
Though, an immense calm belying size, peace  
Tranquil with a cusp of optic fury as its basis.  
You could light a silent, subtle candle there.

The glass man waits for night or day to begin,  
For some dove to burble and bubble on the sky,  
But is un-waiting: like a crystallised thought,  
Considering, on our behalf, everything that is.

## A Curlicue In A Comfort Tree

The windows are covered with drops of rain.  
The world is veiled. There are panes of silence,  
Broken by the passage of traffic, life is dear.

I can tell the time of the universe, it is circular.  
We meet each other eternally at the atom's core.  
I kiss the hands of freedom, whatever you embody.

The streets are covered with soft sheets of rain.  
The trees and grass flow. It is their subtle nature.  
The people come out of the rock raise leaden arms.

There is a transmission of sorts, but not of scripture.  
A silent sacrament would be perfectly acceptable;  
We would simply hear the respect for life going on.

The windows are covered with tiny beads of rain.  
The stars are hidden. The grey cloud has a blue edge,  
And the black tyres hiss on the panes. Life is dear.

## Luminous Night

Here is the un-seamed life, no ifs and maybes.  
No possibles. Whatever occurred; occurred.  
The delays perhaps were secret accelerations,  
Hidden maturings about to spring in the rose.  
The wastes of time were investments of days  
To bring about the hour of the unknown poem,  
The lost loves were inevitable failures of mind,  
Incapable of bridging the abyss. Which is not  
To say the flowering of process is pre-destined.  
Freedom is exactly this unfolding of the ghost.

Or call it the phantom man in the phantom life,  
Which is imposed. As opposed to the human  
Spirit which stands in eternity, ever-unfolded.  
Imagine the man in the wind in the spring sun,  
In the radiance of childhood, youth, and age,  
Becoming reality, not merely confronting all  
The dimensions of space, and the angel of time  
That figment of fancy, swooping from the stars,  
To receive this beauty of love, our conception,  
Or rather these gifts of the winnowing of nature.

Here is the seamless life, where nothing occurred  
But that we were part of, where no intention ran  
Its course but creature intention, where free will  
Was free because it was bounded by what we are  
In becoming what we may be. Forever, through us  
And not despite us. Imagine the man in the wind,  
Singing, or how could the streets sing, and despair  
Redeem itself by heart-work, the inner strangeness?  
How could the warmth of the outer sun in the bone  
Proclaim our night's luminance of purple and gold?

## Pigeon In The Mirror

In this mood the shadows in the glass are as real  
As the others, there is a brilliance of leaves shaken  
In an air cloud-filled with grey and blue. Forsythia  
Tries to begin, tiny daffodils are already swaying.

In this mood reality is seen as the construct it is,  
The space where we live between the real, unreal,  
Inhabited by minds, and as a projection of mind,  
And nothing more real than what we think is so.

Now the reverse of the world is reflected and new,  
The garden seen right to left in the mirror, a child  
On a slide or a swing or thrashing the spring grass  
The first believer. Imagination swings its far bell.

In this mood the wind makes a noise, the pigeon  
Climbs the broken tiles, always confident, afraid:  
There is a flight, not yet anticipated fully; a move  
In the arc of freedom which may lead to the place.

There is a shifting on the roof, and in the silence  
Of the glass, an adjustment towards, a preparation  
For the outward slant, until in the poplar's height  
Down-seeing, all that was in the mind lies spread.

## Peculiar Harvest

The light is fading, the cherry-tree is blooming.  
A westerly wind caresses the cloud and flows  
Over the sky, a silky gust of material process.

I'm tired of creating, disappointed and disturbed  
By the thing created. The self we thought is never  
The self we are, never the self we imagined it to be.

The light's changing, the cherry-tree is emerging  
From its background like a gift of the nature-tree  
With all its forks, drawn in an origin of the species.

The self-image exhaled like a phantom shimmers  
Above the houses; the streets; the distant parkland:  
Blake knew all about it, he saw the inherent danger.

The light's fading, the cherry tree has blossomed.  
Its petals will scatter over the whole spring lawn,  
A fatal richness almost as lovely still as its promise.

## The Mountain In The Mind

The mountain in the mind's the mountain we climb.  
Its slopes are measured from real slopes, its rock  
Is a rock we apprehend with another sense, inward  
And secret. The air we breathe we brought here.

The mountain in the mind is the refuge we created.  
We placed its stones and pines, sighed its clouds.  
Though the original we climbed is this imaginary  
Space where we now climb, it's the same irreality.

Nothing complete. It's vague, it drifts like a space  
In thought or artificially precise as in a dream, false  
But truer than what we know, indeterminate like time,  
And dangerous, leading to precipice, abyss, ledge, fall.

Recognition would be superfluous. No surprise if here  
We exist, since this is our being, laid out on the map.  
Though we can't name the peak, it names us: the tarn  
Far below defines our shape in its cold blue distinction.

The poetry of the place is ours. We climb what's inside  
Outwardly, and inwardly what's outside, clothed in turf  
Or juniper, sliding off as scree, polished and treacherous  
After rain, dissected by the streams of feeling, icy cold,

Or surprisingly warm in the new sun. And there, in inner  
Vision, see, the climber, miniature and striving stumble  
Upwards, that lesser figure adrift in mist; seeing in turn,  
Tinier mountains in the mind, and far, diminished selves.

## **Nothing To You, Everything To Me**

It's the heart that falls. Hopkins' aspens drop  
From the sky, leaving that pure pang of blue.

These I went by, each day, the winter long,  
Admiring the dumb endurance, all the form

Of wiry twigs threaded against white cloud.  
Nothing: we say. A bit of some final plan.

But heartwood breaks the heart, all's a death,  
A broken love, at which we catch our breath.

## Mind Music

Too many poems echo in the memory, become  
Involved with the present. Is this our mythology?

No other's possible except the self-created: Blake's  
Mistake. One man's visions are scarcely mythical.

But a whole culture? Pound tried. Yeats tried. Eliot  
Tried saving appearances. Now we stretch metaphors,

Or should we document the individual life? That goes  
On, young poets still dream the personal spells truth.

Better to celebrate, in deepest thought, and all try  
Everywhere to honour life. Write the poems you can,

Testify to everyone human, everything evermore human.  
A shout in the street, an eye in the shadow: mind music.

## The Proper Study

Dubious forward vision: best suited to brief crises;  
Prone to rushes of sentiment when faced with truth,  
Though long-term memory poor. Takes pleasure in  
Group ritual, those feelings of solidarity, the illusion  
That more means clearer, finer, better. Driven to ends  
By root desire. Especially susceptible to greed or fear;  
Redeemed by creativity and love. Strangely irrational  
When it comes to habitual methods, prone to received  
Ideas. A tightrope walker dancing on an invisible wire,  
Over the waterfall of infinite space, intrigued by spray.  
A twittering bird of metal hung in a miraculous machine.  
Shy of the body while flagrantly disposed to exhibit flesh.  
Shy of the mind, but happy to use its unintended products.  
Exaggerating the working of the unconscious, but ignoring  
Its strengths utterly. Wasteful. Lazy in matters of principle,  
Happy with inertia; selfish, understandably, being transient;  
Unselfish, surprisingly, when that whole genetic heritage  
Kicks in. Incapable of understanding that power is empty;  
That institutions kill though they save from chaos; that all  
Are equal in feeling; that the creatures require respect too;  
That the only gods and demons are the creations of fancy,  
There to assuage the deep hurt, the deep sorrow, the guilt,  
But no more a reflection of what is than an idle metaphor;  
That time does not exist; the universe wholly intentionless.  
Believing in phantoms, not understanding self's a phantom;  
Believing the real, not understanding reality's a construct,  
Though there's plenty out there and mind lives in the unreal.  
Not to be trusted, except in certain circumstances with our  
All. Not loveable, yet somehow to be loved. Not beautiful  
Yet a creator of rare beauty. A nest of falsehoods in search  
Of ultimate truth.

## Past Is Prologue

Prospero was happy to have got rid of Ariel, though  
He had once felt otherwise. Now he could get down  
To control and governance, to heavy censure of light,  
And exaltation of the prosaic. Item: one broken staff,  
Item: a buried book with damp pages. He could rest  
At last in his pomposity, savouring the chill in the air.  
Some things were better left alone, he felt, cleft trees  
For instance. The dreams and the phantoms abolished,  
One can sit at the little table in the library and ignore  
One's own phantom shape in the mirror. The ghosts  
And the dreams gone, the cloud castles, the illusions  
Of mercy and redemption. Time to consider the future,  
The marriage of order and law, the rule of a kingdom,  
Though not the obvious kingdom; there is more than  
One island at stake; Caliban and Sycorax have friends.  
Prospero is only vaguely aware of the singing sounds  
In the air, the elusive music, a stranger storm brewing.

## Here And Not-Here

He put his hand into Being then it vanished.  
It was flesh and bone, not what hand meant.  
His shadow was more real, it strode on snow,  
Danced on the river, realised a swollen moon.  
More like a thought, half-present, half-absent,  
A fictive abstraction more solid than the door,  
Which immediately opened onto starlit space.

He moved his arm after the hand, it was gone.  
It turned into cloth and an angle of inflection,  
Like that of a statue in the garden, a far gesture.  
His memory of grass was more real, it's green  
Echoed in the water, a slant over the shallows,  
More an existent cry of matter to him than matter  
Itself, always transmuting itself into alien absence.

He stepped wholly into the black place, and stood  
Still. There was nothing left of him by the water,  
The lake shone empty and the shore was empty.  
Looking round was nowhere he had come from,  
Ahead was the bench, a bird fashioned of metal,  
The crystal sun, and trees of translucent emotion.  
The inside of his body was only feeling, in mind,

His insides were thought, outsides a trick of vision,  
The crazy room that looks normal in the eye-hole,  
All strange dimensions. He stood in the dark, ear  
Tuned to the water flowing, black churn of night.  
The wind blew through him. The light emerged  
Unchanged from its traverse through vein and skin,  
There was nothing inside him but the glistening air.

He accustomed himself to being universe. Freed  
From intent, absorbed the movement of baryons,  
Became the singularity of the aeons. He shone  
With engendered brightness in the awful silence.  
Slowly he moved the gloves of his fingers, they  
Were gas-veils; the shrouds of his feet, they were  
Invisible clouds, weighting him darkly to the stars.

## Tender Spirit

Allen Ginsberg I dream of you, mad choirboy  
Asking the questions, saying the words no one  
Else dared say, and having your answers feted  
Unheard. That's the way of the prophets, Allen.

You and Whitman, dancing over the moonlit  
Lawns in haste to make all men one, and all  
Women one, and the species hear the sound  
Of its wailing, feel the glow of its own love.

You in hunger, in strange America, ghostly  
In the neon glow, feeding the starving seeds  
Of sunflowers and watching Blake in eternity  
Engrave the shepherds of light with iron pen.

You who saw deeper, thought better, laughed  
Longer than the clowns of tyranny, grease-paint  
Faces, staring wild from the tombs of language  
Weapons in their hands, their phantom hearts.

You who hung out in all the religions, doubtful,  
Caught in the net of flesh, and hopeless humble,  
Anxious in the penumbra of the bitter almonds,  
Of an exiled race, and oddly happy in Hollywood.

Ignu, saying Kaddish in a dark street in Harlem,  
Dreaming of the vision of merciful time burning  
Over the silent City. I dream of you Allen, brave  
Conjurer of music from our howls, and our sighs.

History will make your poem prophetic, you said,  
Spiritual music for the ghosts lost in weary metal  
On a highway you blazed by with Neal, screaming,  
Sucking in the long breath of Poesy, Sanity, Charity.

I dream of you, marvellous and immortal, dropped  
From some star, with a bag of words, felt, coloured,  
Stuck now with the words in your own books, bone  
In the skeleton of your century, light now to mine.

## Spring!

Spring again, and I search for a language  
Uncorrupted, a Self not part of the blind  
Delusion. March sun in the leafless garden,  
Waiting for leaves. But at dawn I watched

On the screen, humans saving dolphins  
On a beach in Brazil. All our shallows.  
That much, a finger's breadth, between  
Life and death of the beautiful creature.

Spring again, and the dark branches go  
Green with buds, unfurl flowers on bare  
Stems, hang there fragrant, black earth.  
I, the unfreezing of the ice-bound spirit.

Spring again, and I search for your ghost  
Among all the ghosts, those days, the dead  
Universes. So dull to be bound to only one,  
By the speed of light, by the dark of matter.

So bright to be mind. Watching the trees  
Howl with joy if they could in the day-glow.  
Sensual tremor. Mighty shake and roll of old  
Earth, ever-new. Thank everything! Spring!

## Holding Hands By The Fire: Winter

Every fragile instant is impossible,  
Therefore real, a confluence of things.  
Each moment, a freak of circumstance.

So as we sit here on a winter evening,  
In front of the fire, two and the night,  
This is the transient miracle, this flame.

The private minds, carelessly in tune;  
Two on a bare branch like two crows  
Cawing in shadow-less sunlight on the heath.

We circle a thought perhaps, or diverge.  
Creature minds. You can't be sure ever  
What flickers behind the silent mask.

Or masque. The universe in its colourful  
Costumes, the gossamer Harlequins of light,  
Gazing moonstruck at our dance as Pierrot,

Matter, flickers in the ash as if it had mind.  
We confuse all these forms at the conflux;  
Rightly, all energy in its moment of change.

Time's not what we think. The world's unreal.  
Place your hand in mine, and hold to the abyss,  
Over which this moment walks with dove's feet.

## **You Can Write A Poem On Anything**

In a big circular fat-bellied pot with a blueberry in;  
Stones placed on the dark compost. White-striped  
Aboriginal greys, dappled pale greens, fissured pinks  
And blacks. The sun shines, these are forms; glow  
Of white smooth translucent shell too; orange quartz;  
That ellipse of frosted calcite, perfect; pudding-stone,  
Crystal. Beyond the rim, the dark soil of the border,  
Where raw Nature flowers. Human is formal, round,  
World is informal, and inwardly violent with being.  
Look, as a tiny fly progresses. How did that get here?

## The Voyeur of Self In The Guise Of The Other

Oh yes, we all long to be part of other lives.  
One life is never enough. The audience  
Would be the actress, the lover the loved.

There is a hankering to live in the other,  
To be the voyeur of the interior being,  
And be the only inhabitant of her dream.

Self is the resistance, the undeniable truth  
That wherever we go we only bring ourselves,  
That the other would essentially end as us,

And derided, as no more than than the phantom,  
The abandoned crab-shell, the empty chrysalis  
With the moth flown, but the rose corrupted.

That longing to live again in the other life,  
To be more than this. To own and contain,  
What all life cries must never be owned,

And never be contained.

## **In the Light Of The Lamp**

I see your face  
At this strange confluence of time and space,  
Face in the mind, face behind the eyes,  
At this strange confluence of time and space,  
I see your face.

## Green Twilight

In the deepest place world unwinds itself,  
Between the evening and the fading light:  
It is as if we were neither here nor there.

It's not precisely a region beyond the borders  
Of mind, but surely imagination ceases here;  
No shore by the Acheron, Lethe or the Styx,

Which are mythical equivalents of this space,  
Between the self and the whole of what is not,  
That knows nothing of you, your aims, desires,

Implied beliefs, strange fantasies, unreal dreams,  
Feelings, rarely returned (and then only mirrors,  
Reflections from the other, self-same and silent).

It is a space in a room, in a green air of twilight,  
Far beyond time, far from some quartet's tremor,  
Or cello's rhythm, from art and meaning's call.

It is a stillness you compose. You exist as it,  
And refrain from exiting towards the richness,  
Because its simplicity long ago enchanted you.

More than the lover? Nothing more than her,  
And yet this too seduces, this is also her net  
Thrown across the eyes and lips, her doing.

Here you can go without going, leave without  
Leaving. Here you can stay, as on an island,  
Or a slow beach where the waves fall softly.

Here you can hover on the edge of non-being,  
Rest on the void. Here distant branches wave  
Tall fronds. Here world sings her alien song.

## Considering The Portrait

I would be beautiful for you, and not strange.  
I would be the delight of the internal smile,  
And not the chill of a universe beyond knowing.

I would be kind. I would imagine doves flying,  
The edges of cicada-leaves reflecting the sun,  
A network of streets filled with our muteness.

I would be what you wish and not what I wish.  
I would be human attention, and not the word,  
The gold fire of spring, not the lead snowman.

I would be the sky over you and the ground  
Cupping your feet, the sand of intelligence,  
And a corner of blue wave bringing you time.

I would be beautiful as you, and not strange.  
I would be the well of feeling we sank down  
Into this universe, far underneath our bodies,

Out of which, like a black hole spewing photons,  
Comes the x-ray light of love and form we made.  
I would be everything I am not, all your silences.

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