

Voiceless Banners Blowing

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'The essential order of things is that of Nature. To achieve spiritual union with Nature is enlightenment.'

Tao Sheng: c400: The Way

'Let your nature merge with the Way, and wander in it free from care.'

Seng Ts'an: c600: Trust in the Heart

Contents

Voiceless Banners Blowing.....	7
Purify Your Mind	9
Beautiful Attachment.....	10
Baths	12
All The Creatures.....	13
Golden Grass	14
Intricate Structure, Strange Lives	15
Not Easy, Not Careless.....	16
Kyoto	18
Three Ways For the Spirit	19
Moonlit Walk.....	20
It's A Long Time Now	22
Every Creature.....	24
Cultivars.....	26
How Do You Climb?.....	27
The Opposite of Deadly.....	28
Going Quietly, Harming Nothing.....	29
The Colour Blue	30
Whose Idea Were Cities?	31
Big Snow Mountain.....	32
Ten Billion Splinters.....	33
Fragile By Starlight	34
Dancing in the Eye of Night.....	35
Seeing It.....	36
Near Benares (Or Elsewhere).....	39
What Are You Saying?.....	40
Before the Felling	41
It Freely Works Without Us	42
Matter Is Spirit: Both Are Process.....	43
Our Power Is Silence	44
Not Platonist	45
Rehearse Infinity.....	46
No Fuss, No Claims.....	47
The Reverse Side	48
In Flight	50
Low Slopes	51
There's a Way.....	52
Near Conjunction.....	53
Inanimate: Not Dead.....	54

This Afternoon.....	55
Tryst.....	56
The City.....	57
Mad Clouds.....	59
Infinitely Free.....	60
The Island.....	61
Ice-Burning.....	63
Perverse Thoughts About Communication.....	64
Every New Freedom.....	65
Where We Are Going.....	66
The Warm Eye of Deer.....	67
All Gone, Weak.....	68
Each of Us Fails in Our Own Way.....	69
Not All Articulate, or All-Flowing.....	70
Sound-Waves in the Night.....	71
Delight is Best.....	73
Letting the Objects Breathe.....	74
Is It Poetry?.....	75
To Find Yourself You Must Give Yourself Away.....	76
Stay Hidden.....	77
Kept In Mind.....	78
All Night Harmonious Blue.....	79
Offering.....	80
Concerning The Future Poetry.....	81
Forsythia.....	82
Waiting for Treatment, Reading the Magazines.....	83
Metaphysical Music.....	84
Looking into the Flame.....	85
Away.....	86
Outer Falls Through Inner.....	87
The Shores.....	88
The Territory.....	90
All the Tongues.....	93
Every England.....	95
Cities Within.....	96
Pine After Pine.....	97
Do We Love?.....	98
Minnow.....	99
Words for the Large Hadron Collider.....	100
On the Veins.....	101
The Question.....	102
Our Loss.....	103
The Heart of Darkness.....	104

Un-belonging	105
Still Free Within	106
Hard Labour.....	107
While We Go By	108
If You Come Here	109
In The Garden.....	110
Water-Lilies	111
Ça Suffit.....	112
AI	113
Humility	114
Natura	115
In The Glass.....	116
So Hard	117
Greed And Fear	118
Azalea Flowers	119
Green Bay	121
Dark Night	122
Shale	123
Oil	124
Poles.....	125
Deep Ecology?.....	126
Every One Original.....	128
Far Star.....	129
Irreality	130
Index Of First Lines.....	133

Voiceless Banners Blowing

Far through Western sky
Mountain crests,
Swathes of forest,
Bright, cold rivers.

These outlast us,
All our suffering
And our singing,
Bones of Hills,

Beyond to the Arctic Circle,
Across or down the world
(Andes, Himavant)
The dragon lines.

There is no power
Here but the power
To spoil: ours
The spoils of power.

The living land
Sings in our hearts,
And the secret,
In the singing.

The silent secret
Of where we are
On the Way
This species.

Patterns of light,
Wrapped in energies,
Lost in the Universe,
Deep in Mind.

Strong wind at dawn
Bows the pines,
Shakes their needles
Green and shining.

Even the mountain flows,
The Diamond Peak,
Changing like the Lake,
We circle silence.

Like pine we shiver
Tremble, glitter, bow.
Oh, don't use mind
To look for mind,

It's here, all the Time,
Can't grasp or leave it,
Process in the channel
Of our arteries, our veins,

In these bodies, flickering,
And the ghosts before us,
All the lands' phantoms
Beckoning in the dawn.

All the wondrous silence
Filled, with uncreated
Beauty: these white clouds,
Voiceless banners blowing.

Purify Your Mind

On February ice
Scenting the pines,
No heat in the rocks,
Thin squirrels leap

To reach the oak bark,
Climb and hide
Behind the bole,
In their space.

In mine, time slows,
The wind stirs,
Old leaves whirl,
Birds shelter.

On crusts of mud,
Boots crackle,
Twigs splinter,
Life sways by a thread,

But comes through,
Its deep resilience.
Just what survives
Survives. Good at it.

Close to Nature
No for or against.
The clear calm
Peace of emptiness.

City quiet behind,
Light in the woods
On diamond snow
Purify your Mind.

Beautiful Attachment

In far-flung words
Lovers meet, in minds
Beautiful with longing,
Or sweet with pain.

All life is suffering,
Sakyamuni said,
But what is life
Without this love?

No wide compassion
Substitutes for this,
No empty calm.
Trust in the heart.

Turn craving to ties
Of eternal light,
Turn desire to gifts
Of mutual joy,

In this one world
That we pass through
Like clouds or water
Bright with being,

Don't turn away
From Nature, all
This essential life,
The great flame.

No fixed self no
Things, all is flow,
Energy's web,
Go flow with it

Into Nature,
Bearing love,
For all sentient
Lives, but what

Is life without love,
Between lovers?

Baths

Ah dark hot flow
Of bubbling spring,
Heats the floating
Body: sing the flesh

Dabbling in its sac,
Flicking drops of light,
Diving, surfacing,
Following the vortex.

Like flame of lava fields
Earth flows inside,
Mind is comfortable
Clothed in its birthright.

Our sap rises, loving
Hands bare touch and meet
In careless passage,
Confident thought-paths

Intertwine forever.
On slippery tiles
Feet dance, plunge
Cold into awareness

Of what is Other.
Mirror self like water,
All one species,
Endless selves.

All The Creatures

All the creatures have voices,
Every one a person,
As to their rights
We grant them rights
Out of our compassion
Fraternity, delight,
Or we deny them,
Out of our cruelty
Our selfishness,
Our craving for pleasure.

All the creatures make a life,
A personality in being,
Creatures of the wave
Or of the wind and air,
Tree-clingers, burrowers,
Night-watchers of Arcturus
Or sleepers in dark dust,
Beetle, ant, hawk, deer,
All the creatures have feelings,
We fearfully acknowledge.

Give them space and time to be,
And give ourselves the same,
Stop the killing and pretence,
Most of all cease the lying,
The rationalising of pain,
The accreditation of jailors,
The myths of conservation,
And the endless interference,
Recognise the natural world
Forever, and take our place.

Golden Grass

Old temple trail, this path
Covered with dust and pine
Goes to the hermit's hut
Through golden grasses
And bowing fronds of tall
Black bamboo, statues,
Gold edges of beams, tiles,
What have these to do
With getting free of all
Possessions, ending craving?
Entangled, push through leaves,
Come out on open meadow,
Climb a little, sit by firs,
Forget the reasons, wait
While thought that's carried
Settles in the spirit, weight
Lifts free, and mind clears,
Then un-remembered mind.

Beautiful March sunlight
Tall trees, small lake, blue
A fragment, corner of azure,
Torn from the higher air,
All cultures build, and hang
Their ornaments in space,
All devotions make *mandalas*,
And rites make humans calm.
Maples, temples, little shrines,
Aesthetic lovely clutter of ages,
Has nothing to do with the Void,
Decorative forms ease the heart,
Radical impermanence forgotten.
Emptiness is what is transmitted,
But what is this Transmission?
Silently through golden grass.

Intricate Structure, Strange Lives

Gold butterfly hangs
From the autumn stem,
Green-brown mottled wood,
Buddleia, I think,
Dries next to its chrysalis,
A pendant Tartar helmet
Dome and tattered silk,
In pale sun.

In aspen, birch and ash
Quiet countryside
Fields of feathered seed;
Now ride the wind
To Central Mexico,
Frail traveller.
The imago soul
Eats nectar.

From meadows, rivers, cities,
To Sierra Madre fir
And *oyamel* pine,
Cold nights
And predators.
Millions clothe the trees
Carpet the forest floor,
Millions of sister-brothers,

Mouse skitters
Over butterfly wings
Like tissue paper,
Nature's plenty,
The Many
For the Few.
And there we log,
And here we build.

Not Easy, Not Careless

All boils down, all sinks down
To warmth or cold of the spirit,
Not all this frenetic movement
Of the species forever restless;

To whether I speak to you in more
Than dead words to make creation;
To whether my question becomes
Your question and has meaning;

To the focus of our love, its fires;
Whether in the mighty mirror
There is a reflected echo, Time
Opens for a moment its corolla

And breaks down all the walls
Between us, and not cheaply
In some en masse mess of soft
Mind-destroyed facile feeling

But finely, and intensely in mind
And true knowing, all Donne's cries
To melt into his god, like woman,
All the silences Frost knew and told

Behind the surface, farmed reality.
Whether the universe empty shines
With form, or frightens us, the tiny,
Who cannot fill space with spirit

Only abolish it completely, touch
And meet, and share and give, sigh
For our shared being and distress:
Smiling Taoist monks no consolation,

For all those lost and moments lost
In the whirlwind snow and ash of light,
Where we still show, survivors, white
With the settled aftermath of living,

Lie like the crushed dead stalk-flowers
By the highway, dark and stained,
Or tattered in the wastelands left
Between machines of progress.

All boils down to the electric wire
In the nerves and spirit that connects
Across the shadow-fields of eternity,
And lights the signal-light and burns,

Alone if needs be in the empty field,
Speaks out to the heart of the traveller,
Lights torches of understanding, speaks
To you in words, ah, beyond meaning.

Kyoto

In the garden in Kyoto
Green moss everywhere
On stones and bridges
Emerald cloak, silent.

Kano Tanyu's pines
At Nijo Castle
Twist and turn
Holding high their crowns.

Naonobu's cherries,
Nightingale floors,
Panther crouching
In the bamboo grove.

The philosopher's walk
Past canal-side beauty:
At Nanzen-ji, Zen
Tiger drinking water.

This old city
Sweet as Time:
You too will be
Swept under.

Three Ways For the Spirit

There are three ways.
Like Proust's Ways
You can't take them
All together but some
Places they meet,
Transiently, in us.

The Supernatural way
Goes via gods and demons,
Personal or impersonal,
And other after worlds,
But sometimes ends
In kindness compassion.

The way of Mind
Goes via control
And abnegation
Of all craving,
The Buddhist way:
Contains more truth,
Ends in extinction.

And Nature's Way
Goes nowhere
Offers nothing
Embraces flow
Deals in transience,
Contains the truth,
Ends in Love and Beauty.

Moonlit Walk

The moonlit walk by night
On snowy evening
Goes down through old woods
And an ancient lane
Sweet, lonely
In the silence,
To small frozen lake
And icy reed-beds.

If this were Dante, Virgil,
Charon might be boating
Somewhere the other side,
Poling through
Arctic shallows
Humming softly
Considering the mass
And weight of souls.

But this is deeper,
Nature breathing in,
A world of creatures hidden
No human cries
Reaching through.
This is beautiful
Non-human space-time
The purposeless void.

The moonlight and the ice,
Pale frozen stalks and leaves,
Fish motionless in rest,
Beneath the surface,
Ignorant of all we do,
But share our joy
In moving Spring
And free-flowing water.

There is no other being.
We should return this planet
To what it was before,
A plethora of intentionless
Given forms,
Sifted through the mesh
High-wrought beauty
Simple warm lives,

The meaning of them all,
All the old masters,
To eschew the infinite
And disregard the Self,
Consider Nature,
And sink ourselves in form.
In not thinking of Self,
Self is free.

It's A Long Time Now

It's a long time now
Waiting
For Man to be re-born
And Woman.

We've traced the path
We came along
The intricate process
Called flesh,

History, its manifestations,
Biology its shifting
Inheritable present,
Power, its nemesis.

Given the truth was seen
Centuries ago,
The transience, the limits,
The need for compassion,

Given the beauty formed,
The love testified,
The science and the arts,
In peace and kindness,

It's a long time now
Waiting for the new.
And it's still there,
The Ideal, the Idea,

Underneath the trappings,
All the corruptions,
The religions and entities,
The shades and phantoms,

Men and women
Free of self, on Earth,
Reborn in joy
After the long sorrow,

Entering Nature
And respecting it,
Entering Beauty
And creating it.

Wondering why
The lowest meanest
Denominator rules
The shallow world,

And waiting,
However long,
However long it takes
For freedom,

The true Enlightenment
That has not yet
Begun and never ends,
Those future shores.

Every Creature

Every creature
Intricate,
Three million years
And no design,
Only pattern,
Until behaviour
Intrigues and form
Is Beauty, and all
Process of energies,
Shimmering in the Void.

These insect rituals
And bird affections,
These fears and fires of deer,
Or cougar mysteries,
The life of plants,
The universe of mosses,
Sea, Desert, Mountain, Lake,
Three billion years
Or four, all energies
Glittering in the Silence.

Every creature magical,
Mastery, miracle
Of perseverance,
Slipping through,
The weakest seeming
Strong in survival,
Life and death
Sharpening the species.
Will we be half as good
When our time comes?

A few million years
Of the planet
Its fractal detail,
Our small portion,
Process on process
And our brief coming
And our small dreaming,
Our shining passing
Like phantoms, illusions,
No abiding substance.

The deep wide net,
Our slipping through
To be here, and
Mindless ego,
Why we had to be here!
Why the Universe is made
For us! Delicate
Laughter consumes
A trillion worlds
Shining far-off in the sky.

But every creature
Intricate, we too
Complex and beautiful
Though not in ego,
In creation and compassion,
In truth and love and beauty,
But not in ego,
Not as Self,
(But magical as the selfless)
The Shadow all must kill.

Cultivars

Those wild apples
Of the Tien Shan
Grew sweeter
By selection
(Bears liked them)

Apricots, walnuts,
Grapes of Kazakhstan,
Before it was such,
Land of the Snow Leopard.

Down the Silk Road,
Apples, swollen, ripe,
A grafted heritage,
To fill the earth,

(The Bears' taste ours,
They spread them
Where they passed,
Sweet interaction.)

Peaches, roses, too,
From mountain China,
Carried onwards with us,
Traded beauty.

How generous those
First passages of being,
Carrying the new,
From far off: cultivars.

How Do You Climb?

Deep in the plant,
Or at the tip,
Modes of behaviour,
Processes we share,
The sense of touch,
The fall of leaves,
How to climb,
The light, the time,
The lines of force.

You think plants are dumb,
Well what is *dumb*?
This shading-off
Of life's abilities
From mind to matter,
Both are process,
And your abilities
How great are they,
How do you climb?

The Opposite of Deadly

The insect buzz of lust,
Greed, anger, envy,
A wasp circling
Maddeningly persistent,
The labours of the bee
Its drunken sloth,
Dragonfly in her pride,
Butterflies twining,
In the August garden.

Everything familiar:
And hardly original
In us, just all there,
The natural appetites,
The processes refined
Ensuring reproduction
And survival, a life
In Nature, whose only
Meaning is to live,

Which is not purpose,
Only paths, directions,
The intricate complex
Of the Way, entangled
Beings sifted through
The Moon's white sieve,
The Sun's dark tray,
Three billion years,
One planet, and no sin.

These we develop
These ancestral trails,
Affirm our values;
Love, beauty, truth;
Must take account
Of our shared being.
On the life of plants,
Insects, creatures,
Found our values.

Going Quietly, Harming Nothing

The great Wheel turns in silence,
The Wheel of Nature,
How hard to reconcile
The pain, the beauty.

Near Chung-tien
George Forrest found
Blue gentians
Sino-ornata,

At fifteen thousand feet
High above human
Misery and lies,
Range after range

Of mountains, capped
With snow, swollen
Rivers, the great four,
And 'intense stillness.

Not even the rustle
Of a blade of grass.'
Primulas in the dry
Limestone cliffs.

Camped below
The Yulong Shan,
And on the Cang Shan
Yellow flowers and pines.

Butterflies, dragonflies,
The great Wheel.
Hard to reconcile
The pain, the beauty.

The Colour Blue

Your mannerisms, dear as flowers,
Creatures, leaves, high hills;
Form of the eye and eyelid,
Shift of leg or arm, slant smile,
The lilt of voice, flash of mind.
I understand this grasp of things,
Reality in the detail, description
Of the object, painting-in the scene,
The technical terms, and the tools
Displayed, the individual presence.

Cascades too of names and places,
Glimpsed photography, the images
That capture all the word cannot,
Just so, the tantalising wish to know
The what, not just the how, what
World is, energy, time, light, being,
The difference between the description
In process, mechanism, math, or speech,
And the immanent revelation of the real:
The colour blue, and not what causes it.

So I recall you in images and lose you,
Draw to myself the net of words, and miss
The living meaning. As the species now
Misses that primal participation, the ties
That tied us, aware, to breath of process,
Though no one can forsake the process:
The question is whether it lives in us.
Love, the mannerisms dear as flowers,
The little quirk of eye and eyelid, the jaw,
The lips, the slope of neck, the smile.

Whose Idea Were Cities?

Great dark empty night-time streets, lights
Glow at intersections, mind comes and goes,
Crossing the wastelands, on pavement stone,
The silent front of offices, backs of stores,
Refuge, refuse, under-belly of the sleeping
Giant, never mysterious, forever mundane,
Though raising fear, insecurities, the threat
Of everything human, everything inhuman.

The citizens rest. Denizens still cruise the dark
Shadow-concrete and bitter-neon blue as pain,
Night-workers scuttle in moonless leaves to clear
And shift the detritus of day for other dawns,
And we are far here from streams and mountains;
Shining by night, but not with spiritual light.
Division of labour, mind, desire, direction,
Here gathered in this we build: in this we hive.

Big Snow Mountain

The yellow flowers against the misted pines
Hang on wide slopes. The loggers not here yet,
And purple flowers growing in moss and stone
Frame raw ice-crested peaks laid out beyond.
On Big Snow Mountain no one cleared or burned,
No one possessed this, owned this, or belonged,
This was, this is, the virgin core of the world,
Seen, but still just passed by, a thousand miles
Of seamed and folded ridges, valleys, rocks.

These elevated gardens of the Earth, gleaming
With colour, the azure blue above, or Moon,
Pale satellite, flying through bright white cloud;
So much more lovely than we piteous humans,
Clinging here on wild slopes deep in flowers.
Even more than birds, flowers are the innocents,
Those tiny individual lives, high autumn fields,
Deep blue tongues of iris, delicate *meconopsis*,
Harmless hosts falling, in a rain of tenderness.

Ten Billion Splinters

Heron cautious on ice, a ballet dancer,
Makes no call of the wild, silently
Steps through another world to mine.

There must be shallows in that angle,
Where the lake still breathes, fish flicker,
And the line between life and life is drawn.

Is heron closer to fish than I to heron?
Separate close-sealed worlds co-exist,
As Blake saw, each space is different,

As mine to yours, as mind to mind,
Not islands, no, yet promontories still,
Donne said, joined and yet not joined,

Places from which to view dimensions,
The seas and frontiers where we exist,
Ten billion splinters of the diamond light.

Fragile By Starlight

The soft deer delicate as a star
Passes under Venus, over rock,
A long white shelf, and vanishes
Through moss towards the trees.

Stone and star squeeze our humanity
Into this little space, hard to breathe,
Where we claim, how, the sovereignty,
Nothing to show except our transience,

Like to, but less lovely than, the deer's.
Out there the forest to the far horizon,
A sudden image of eternity glowing
With light, and brighter than a city,

Lightning in the mind, that gazes deep
Into the silence of the universe,
Flares: and ice and fire fill the mouth,
Our embers there hurled into the sky.

Dancing in the Eye of Night

Mind in love
Is mind's delight,
Dancing in the eye
Of night.

Solitude, sweet as fire,
Mind's delight
Before
Desire.

Mind, in love
Of universe,
It's one meaning
Now rehearse.

Love in mind
Is mind's delight,
Dancing
In the eye of night.

Seeing It

I see it in the way the world advances
Through beautiful eternity,
How we step endlessly out of time,
On the edge of the void,
Or enter each other's spirits,
Leaving all recognisable lands
Behind, to survive by feeling
In the strange emotional depths:
That flicker of pain do you know it?
Or desire, or more often simply strangeness,
The ghostly self-identity, the being
Unsure of what once seemed certain,
No more capable of what seemed easy,
No longer knowing, or understanding:
Half the world is the same, the others
Filled with such weird positivity
Their burn of will and effort blazing
On abandoned hillsides after the storm,
Shames us, though we share no flame,
Being gathered in a different stillness,
Silence, the communion of an ancient
Poesy, the song of a deeper species,
The first faint lovely signs of humanity
By the long-lost shores, in bleached grasslands,
Wrapped in sublime ignorance, and truth,
Caught by the music of an earlier passing,
And another a purer sweeter potential,

I see it in the way the planet sails
Through a phantom space only imagined,
Beyond the blue where the hawk spirals,
Leaving us here in another dimension,
The place of spirit where we are alone
Yet continually touching like leaves,
Challenged by formalisms, habits, keys,
The mouths and ears of the world, the fingers
And eyes of the world, transformed
To mysterious speech and unsure imagery.

I recognise its marvellous traces, I see it
In empty houses that rise in the sky
Turn their black windows to east
And west, mocking our presence
Unintentionally, unaware, keeping our
Secrets, of flesh slipping through,
Hiding the beauty of secret souls,
Filling with us and emptying us out,
Blind to our hates, cries, anxiety,
Bearing our scars and spillages,
Drenched by moonlight, daylight
Or darkness, flowing or still, in shadow
Wombs for us, caves for us, graves for us,
All our childhood youth age maturity
Aching ignorant innocence, stupid wisdom
Of time, concealing and caring in cocoons
Of stone wood plaster brick plastic steel
For the strange souls cached like jewels
In the depths of their rooms, universes
All locked away from us, each other, rolled
With the Earth through its visionary passing,
Our vehicle, great car, blue auto of light
Churning invisible miles through fantastic space
That which may or may not exist between things
Who knows? Its, our, intangibility so clear though.

I see it at night in the ceiling ripple of headlights
From whatever goes by, the roar of its wheels,
Or a trace of a moon in the curtain, hanging,
Or a glimmer of lamps between trees, a whisper
Of Time and Eternity on the streets of darkness:
It's where life and death join in deep transience,
Fabric of what we are, shadows, on quivering void;
And strange, it should feel strange, we only part-share
This with the creatures, this shiver of feeling
Uniting the dead and dying living and born
Across the desolate emptied gaps of division,
Over the wastelands and deserts and landless oceans,
In knowledge of Being not merely the being aware,
Oh mountains horizons highways and seasons,
Where its light illuminates paradise in radiance.

I see it between the lawns of the world and the silence.
I see it dark on the rail-tracks, bright in the pits of night
Where the lovers gather, where little people wander,
From absence to absence. I see it in rain and the dust,
I see it at beaten crossroads where phantoms point
To the land forgotten, and the past shrouded in air,
I see it now in our tears on the glass, in our pain for the rose,
In the invisible city, deep in the faces of terminals, subways,
In the nightlights of jails, hotel-rooms, theatres, stores,
I see it soaring in long landscapes forged of eternities,
I see it anxious at dawn, beautiful in ankles and wrists,
I hear it sigh, I know its question. I began from its call.

Near Benares (Or Elsewhere)

By the fig tree
On a shelf of ancient stone
Sits a single
Yellow
Flower.

Here the absence
Of all gods is beautiful.
In the gesture,
Living
Heart.

If aesthetics
Made religion true
Then who of us
Would not
Believe?

What Are You Saying?

It's not the poetry that matters,
But living Mind,
Not the poet but the word
And the idea.
Dead Buddhas
Are always
Famous
In the Void,
But such is not
The jewel
Of the lotus,
Nor the Way.

It's not the authority that matters,
True words take
Their authority from Mind
From the idea.
Remember
How Shoju
Thrust the scriptures
In the fire?
Better
To hold
Experience
In your hands.

Before the Felling

Rain on oak leaves,
Beech and birch,
The interlacing branches
Nets of green,
And bowing branches
In the dusk
Sweep low.

Ranked trees at twilight,
In English landscape,
Alder, ash, and fir,
The gleam
Of trees,
The rooted ground
Of being.

Fell trees, fell centuries,
Cut down
The mind itself
Score deep the spirit,
Make agony in the heart,
Sever our lives
From Time.

It Freely Works Without Us

Word is not part.
Word is itself
Subversive, free,
Vanishing here
To rise there,
Still in process.

The word is silent.
The word is individual
Light, not
Anger, truth, or time:
A disregard
For all things temporal.

You think the word
Is merely language,
Communication
Between tongues?
The word is Mind,
Invisible Sun.

Matter Is Spirit: Both Are Process

These serpentine ways.
On the crooked path
We tread the leaves
And navigate the trees,
Press down the dim
Soft darknesses,
Break litter of branches,
Feel the green light
Reflected, enter
Ancient dream,
Valleys of vision.

Deep paths and trails,
The narrow winding tracks,
Obscure solitudes, lanes
Of privacy, inward
Harbours of bark and soil,
All past gone down
In melting leafy pyramids,
In columns of snow,
And everything one moment
In the mind,
Gone as soon as seen.

We climb the hill
All ways are right
And freedom
Impossible in the flesh
Is real in mind,
This acre of woodland
All forest everywhere,
This track the one track,
This place an emblem
Of all our sacred being,
Free of gods.

Our Power Is Silence

Our power is silence.
It's cool this reticence,
Embarrassment at displays,
Disdain for what pays.

Quiet as the green shoots,
And the long stems,
Of pliable bamboo,
Gently leaning.

The deep spirit is still:
Clings to cold cliffs,
And slumbers
In summer grasses.

These varying landscapes
And these inscapes,
Are meditative seeming,
Like enclosed delights.

Does time need your
Voice long, or mine?
From the lit land
A music flows,

Hear if you can.
Open the window wide,
The stream of silence,
Flows through consciousness.

Not Platonist

Love, Truth and Beauty
Only exist in the living Mind,
Are processes of Mind,
Of the Creature creative.

The only Eternity
In which these three exist,
Is the only Eternity
That of every Moment.

Love is delight in the Other,
Truth delight in World,
Beauty delight in Form,
Triple delight of Being.

Love, Truth and Beauty
Only exist in the living Mind,
Our gifts to the Universe,
Of the Creature creating.

Rehearse Infinity

Elephants communicate
By vibrations of the ground,
Of the air, among other ways,
Infrasound, below our threshold;

Creatures by touch, and sight
Chemicals and signals,
Electric flickering, pure light,
Lovely and complex markings,

Speak to each other of life;
In voice, attitude and movement,
Sing to each other of being,
Displaying identity, all particulars;

We in our loves and tears,
To testify we exist,
Delivering the individual
From every phantom mass;

In truth of the human form,
And its inward light,
Communicate humanity,
Rehearse infinity.

No Fuss, No Claims

I dislike the knotted anguished line,
I like the singing line of reason,
Cool as the long breath of the night city,
And the inner meaning of a landscape,
Its illumination, its life from within.

Reason is not the eradication of passion.
Reason without passion is emasculation
Or the sterile womb, the less complete.
I dislike manipulation of my emotions,
There is enough beauty for the flame to flow

Through every crevice of lovely thought,
Light in the night the human form by day;
I dislike the writhings of the confessional,
Reticence knows pain through and through
And is the deepest path to understanding.

A quiet thought, a slow thought turned
In the hand, presented to the eye, is best,
And the furnace of the heart glowing deep,
Turning the molten ore of life to kindness,
Learning the hardest truth, to free, to give.

The Reverse Side

The reverse side of power is betrayal,
As the reverse side of love is trust,
Of which the central truth is the gift
Of freedom. I free you, and you free me.

What do systems offer the soul of man?
Power of isms and the social futility,
Cold work that fails to ease, and the coin
Of Caesar, a tangle of half-brained ideas,

Progress, where, why? Wealth, what, how?
Deep in us the old human gentleness, poesy,
And a beauty that is age-long of mind, flesh,
Illuminating heavens from the deep Earth.

What madness it must be for children to join
This dumb progression, and senseless flailing,
Resting in opiates, dreaming religions, filled
With the sad confusion of all the centuries!

A descent in the dark possible only by habit,
Accustomed to madness of clothes, buildings,
Cars, laws and things, rules and possessions,
The paraphernalia of existence in this world,

Which is not our world, from which we started,
Golden dark in grasslands, laughing by pools,
Raking the bare ground for the uncultivated,
Picking over the litter on a hundred beaches.

No wonder Hindus saw Maya, and Buddha Void,
And Taoist sages danced through the foaming water,
Only craziness, emptiness good enough to capture this,
City tenement silence and forest-bare landslip clay,

Images of the wasteland created by grail craving,
And the irresponsible exercise of power in the name
Of nothing, theory that all gets bettered if tamed,
History's nightmare and the howl scream of war.

I can certainly show you power in a handful of dust,
Human, divine, dreamed or seized, wounded, whole,
Locked-in machinery, process almost biological, fate
Created by inertias, the wheels that turn and grind us.

All the relentless towers and pyramids, domes and spires,
Built to proclaim the institutions of seething billions,
Not even joy of the ants, who probably do feel joy
In their natural inner workings, and external beauties,

Speaking in frequencies, touching in smallnesses,
Vibrating with life in their world separate from ours,
While we rush from end to end of the process working
The smallest levers of selves to propagate our futures.

No I don't cry out an alternative space in nature we belong.
Neither politics nor anarchy suggests a ready salvation.
Nor as long as love, truth, beauty exist do I counsel despair,
Nor as long as the individual bleeds, and the spirit flames,

And Time and Eternity intersect in the moment, ghost
Phantom and spectre kept at bay by imagination's founts,
Human Mind shining still illuminated by its own light,
And every detail infinite and every moment eternal.

But I feel I am allowed to express my inner sadness,
And my ironic laughter at the cavorting of selfhoods,
Echo our loneliness among the stars, and in these hills,
And on these plains, testify to the unseen invisible Earth

Which is created and re-created in every generation
Though often in silence, and in sweet private tenderness,
Through echoing midnight, and the white light of dawn,
Both Woman and Man reborn eternally in every instant,

Emotions feelings deep in the spirit as mind of the human,
Out of which alone emerge compassion, truth, delight,
And not out of systems laws scriptures temples or domes,
But love, from the gift of freedom, and strength, to endure.

In Flight

Slow quiet beauty of the herring gull
As it slides by over the sky silently,
In winter, the strong deliberate flight,
Though it has many cries, echoing calls,
Silver to slate-grey mantle gleaming,
Its two-foot span, its gentle going by.
After the bird has gone, empty heavens,
Faint blues and pale whites, stillness
Like this stillness in the mind, its wake.
Far-off a shriek falling through the ear,
Reflects the fear and trembling forever
In the heart, this never-used-to-being-here.

Low Slopes

Slowly climbing to the mountain lake,
Over the river-meadows from the bridge
Along by deep cold quick-flowing water
Running between ancient walls of stone,
Then climbing up the rock floored path
A few hundred feet, and open hillsides,
Delicate contours, greens and browns,
Intricate escarpments and soft ridges,
The weathered beauty of time-etched slopes,
Brings us to water cupped under dark crags,
Where weather lingers and mist-cloud hangs,
Shingled bays and fern-filled crags behind.
My heart's country. The feet of mountains,
Not the high places, but the humble cairns,
The shattered sheepfolds and sliding scree,
Where mind too will be cleansed, this gleam
Of little made by man, and nothing final,
Transient all worlds slipping by, in eternity.

There's a Way

There's a way of beauty
We keep trying to find,
Even in dark winter
When love evades us.

When we can't manage
Singing words of light,
There's a way of beauty
We keep trying to find.

It's an echo deep in us
Of ancient landscapes,
Those ways of being,
Closer to this Earth.

There's a way of beauty
We keep trying to find.

Near Conjunction

Moon and Mars tonight
In near conjunction,
And your voice lost
In distance, whispering,

Of what might be
Of what still exists
Of what once was
And now is hidden.

So many silences,
So many mouths,
Sunk under the soil,
So many beauties gone.

Moon and Mars tonight
In ice-cold blue,
My mind frozen
On my lips.

Inanimate: Not Dead

The stack of books
On the shelf above,
Breathes power, glows,
Minds stirring there,

A cluster of volumes
Still, in a heap,
Share the night,
I hear them talking.

Un-silent paper,
Living thought,
I listen below –
To other rhymes.

Column of books,
Raised in a pile,
Mind resonates,
Matter's alive.

This Afternoon

I was deep there among the Russians,
Translating Tsvetaeva, felt the sigh
Of strange language-silvered trees,
Embankments, prisons, lamplight,
That last century's mad pain, loss,
Its bitter, its endless waste of being.

Now I'm choosing quotes to clear
The mind, from Shakespeare's plays,
Starting with the Tempest, on my isle,
Wondering about all this too big for us,
This great balloon of magical idea,
Gone wrong: Prospero and Ariel

Are in trouble. Though Lear's behind,
Maybe we can still make the Sonnets.
Now it's snowing, again. White leaves,
White nights, white roads of Russia,
And I hear Rilke speaking to Marina,
'Oh the losses in All, the falling stars!'

Tryst.

I think we'll meet again in another city,
We invent cities. We string them, beads,
Poems, imbued with the singing past,
And conjure ghosts there, phantoms,
Beautiful minds to share our joys.

I think we'll meet again beyond time,
We create time. What we can't capture
Passing, still redeems us, Moment cries
The universe, in a flask of light and air,
And somehow I think we'll meet again.

On the dizzying ramparts of rain and stone,
By the rivers of darkness that drain the earth,
In gardens, in the sad cafes of transience,
Where raw heat seethes behind high walls
Where statues hold their breath among fountains.

I think we'll meet in strangest acceptance,
Like planets that touch sometimes in the sky,
Dance in eclipse, move together and apart,
Moon and Mars, Venus and Jupiter sighing,
Like them I think in time we'll meet again.

The City

The City of the Dead is a puzzled metropolis.
Most get there without really trying, a few did.
There, eyes are haunted by the ghost Regret:
Though the trains run on time, they go nowhere.

The public spaces strive to reduce the emptiness
That everyone knew alive, though equally puzzled
As to why we surround ourselves here with coldness,
When everyone's crying out for personal warmth.

And why we subject ourselves to the machine, Matter,
Cloud our hearts with superstition, heads with lust.
There in the City of the Dead there's time to consider,
Time to get over it, sit on benches, watch the grass,

See the children play in eternity, which is the twinkling
Eye of Moment, and birds splash or fly, or flash
Through the starless heaven above the pavement,
Over the thin dark layers of imaginary ground.

Not that I've travelled there, but I get the idea,
Reading the dead poets, especially the Russians,
Those who held fleeting miracles in open hands,
And wished like Lorca to be the river's running.

The City of the Dead is still called Longing.
No one eats there, or sleeps, but they remember,
How Love threw them about, and Time stole,
Where Joy lurked, and couldn't be captured.

On its outskirts there are woods of leafless trees,
Acres of snowy light, black silhouetted branches,
There (all in mind, you understand) they muse
On the street-signs, which are shifting, transient.

No cash there, no transactions, no mysteries.
Only the puzzlement we feel at real Things,
How they got here, how we did, how it feels.
Statues are faceless there, keep plinths of silence.

And at night which is like day the winds howl,
Blowing discarded papers through the crossroads:
The sky the peculiar white of death's dispassion,
But there, inside, all the colours of passion swirl.

It's a puzzled place the City of the Dead. No one
Is quite sure of its architecture, or landscape,
But they know its emotion rising from the stones,
Like a vast moan of desire from the root of Being.

Mad Clouds

I saw Ikkyu
Vanish in the morning whiteness,
One echo
Of laughter,
And a wild Zen cry!

I called Ikkyu
In the morning: Silence.
Shiver of light
On branches,
Pale green leaves.

No sign of Ikkyu
On swept temple-stairs,
No Ikkyu drinking
Mouth
In the shallow stream.

Still drifting
Dreaming,
In Mori's garden,
In sweet darkness,
Plucking reeds?

Infinitely Free

These five trees, in my line of sight,
Birch, pear, crab-apple, hazel, wych-hazel,
Are the reality, not imagined trees:
Immense complexity of presence,
Intense, twining, dark-branched beauty,
That renders us imaginary, ghosts
Of our dream.

My five trees, are real, but mind is not:
Mind is the voyager in all realities,
The silhouette dark on all horizons:
Bounded by character, inheritance,
Contained by language, or society,
Mind is still infinite, these worlds –
Infinitely free.

The Island

In me, no time passed,
No existence.
There was noise
Without language,
Therefore silence:
Nature's voice.

I heard the humming-birds
Deep in myself.
The Island spoke
In strange sweet tongues,
To my mossed
And lichened spaces.

There seemed no moment
Between then and now.
Lost to the others,
Gone, invisible,
Further than dead,
A shadow in the sun.

Somewhere mind moved,
In the lapse of being.
Bounded by event,
Eventless time ceased:
The Island – always still,
In solitude.

Life for the creatures here,
Place of survival,
But not for mind,
The restless ideas faded,
Seasons and unquiet being,
Overcame.

I joyed, I wept in the night,
I sang to the fern and stone,
In the green glade.
Space here, not time,
Absent from the human,
None to anyone.

Light in my eyes:
Dazed, inchoate
Meaning of isolate
Un-carved essence –
Nature beyond,
The Self unsure.

Ice-Burning

Moment at midnight
When words grow bright and flower.

Snow-melt drips on the wooden table;
Stone paths; fills the hollows.

Making sense of a life: that's difficult:
Wild interplay of given things and the self.

Images in the brain,
Mystery of others tangentially touched.

Body and mind, two amazing things:
How to get behind the words and feel them,

These thoughts, that mean a lot at midnight,
And beauty that makes heart ache, and all

Patter of snow-melt melding with the mind,
This piece of Nature stirred too, ice-burning.

Perverse Thoughts About Communication

And if we can't say it with greatness, why bother?
If we're empty of ideas, whose the grand idea?
Better all those centuries of the common people,
(The ones we would have been, not the few on top)
Who lived their small lives out in the one spot,
Free of the whole world, almost, barely one tongue
Shared, and communication a weird local thing.
Better the isolate and individual greater space,
The long silence, beautiful, and new as a stranger,
Stretching; gleaming, soaring its way to the stars.

That pure stillness of field and hedgerow, the copses
At dawn, the horizon at twilight, white ice on leaves,
Or the first green shoots poking through dark matter,
Real as the hair on your head; the light in your eyes.
Better that distance from the earth, from others,
The unbridgeable space, out of which far exile
Reaching out to the other was intense adventure,
Each new place excitement, each new meaning,
Like crossing the shattered remnants of religion,
To forge new science, new freedom, our new being.

Every New Freedom.

Sweet light at morning:
You are free as a bird,
Even if your bright wings
Beat hard against my heart.

Every new freedom
Gives us back the world,
Gives back relationship,
Pure, to all this species.

And letting-go is hard.
Submerging the self,
For what, without freedom,
Self can only destroy.

Letting-go in this brief life
Of beauty's forever hard,
Yet every new freedom,
Gives Man back the world.

Where We Are Going

The future, the human future, will not be
About science, its products: those we'll have.
Nor about power, or war, or space or trade:
All are just the normal goings-on of being,
What humans do: the deft repeated gestures.

The future, our human future, will not be
About religion (a finished lie, a fantasy),
Nor about building, judging, eating, dying:
All just the routine masteries of being,
What we all do: constructions of society.

No, the future, our human future, will be,
About values – the individual real ethic;
The only debate more than just curiosity
At how the world works, or how to apply it;
The only fight with self that's worth the having.

To explain the mystery of what time created
In us; through the millions of lives of all
The species that went to make this, and our own:
Love, beauty, truth, inexhaustible meaning,
Locked deep in consciousness, three delights.

To feel the other, to ache for form, to grasp
The sorry world. And how delight at the core
Intertwines the three, in our deep relationships:
Love true in beauty, beauty the true beloved,
And truth, loved for its own sake, beautiful.

The Warm Eye of Deer

The warm liquid eye of deer,
Eyelashes flicker in the light.
Buzzard on the bough, waiting.
Do birds yawn inside, silently?

Snake coils, and uncoils, sips
Milk with its flickering tongue,
Butterfly rises to the branch,
Eats blossom, becomes blossom.

Owl at midnight hoots the deep,
Thrills through the mice below,
Those quivering bodies underground.
Were we there once, the inheritors?

Gecko on sticky feet, furry bat,
Snow-leopard, agate-eyed, staring.
Pure disdain, wariness or hatred,
Or simple awareness passing by.

Mother Earth, beauty from the void,
Down silent dark, mind travels aching.
But for this moment, of suspended breath,
Now the one love, of being: unite us all.

All Gone, Weak

Getting it again,
Words glisten.

Buildings, ghosts
In Eternity, shine

In empty space,
We're meat and water.

Being is always
A diamond spirit,

So many minds
Hidden in the world.

Getting it again,
Words shimmer.

On asphalt roads
Phantoms tremble.

Your gentleness
Mine too, exchange.

The powerful dead
All gone, weak.

The species here,
It's word still Love.

Each of Us Fails in Our Own Way

A long way from childhood so to get here:
The way we all have our private memories
And inward world with its specific flavour,
Personality, and a character like all great art,
That captures its moment in time, meaning,
Distinctive, enriching, coils of light and flow.

All is connected by feelings more than ideas,
Or say the ideas are now imbued with feeling,
So that pain, and ache, loneliness and joy
Illuminate the images, and the sensory data.
Say that we're real only in process, and when
The process stops, mind stops, the real goes,

And we vanish back into chaos of potential,
Into the womb of species, the voiceless word,
Having given a unique flavour to the world,
Say that our meaning is in our interactions,
Relationship, though still difficult for some,
To expose the heart to life, to forgo the self.

Not All Articulate, or All-Flowing

It is the ones who can't speak
I represent; those forever silent.
Who wish to speak but cannot:
Life a knot: the mind dark smoke.

Not drama played out in our faces,
Which is something made for others,
Articulate or dumb flows of feeling,
Poured out, like a movie, or a drunk.

Not the naked presentation of self,
As though the world wants to know,
(Oh, but it likes to 'voyeur' the human!)
Not the art, the artefacts, explanation,

But the anguished inner silent cloud,
Like an unseen galaxy, dark matter,
Locked by gravity round a void,
Or a singularity, at least: a chaos.

That's why I present voiceless banners
Blowing (do they move: or is it mind?);
Those great walls of white or grey, hills:
Cumulus, cumulonimbus, nimbostratus,

Banners of silence, mute floating islands
For those who aren't loved or famous
Characters, mirroring the species to itself,
But the constricted, tangled, anguished,

Incapable of utterance, tongue-tied, snagged
On the tips of the thorns they pass, tripped
By the black earth over which we stumble.
Clarity of seeing engenders compassion.

Sound-Waves in the Night

Man at war
And mind at peace.
This world
Un-reconciled.

An Lu-Shan
Pulled down an empire,
The Toltecs
Built one,

While Taoist masters
Tranquil in the mountains
Kept well off
The road.

Mind the wheels,
They kick up dust!
Chariots or jeeps
All one.

In the heart, design,
In the mind, beauty,
In the spirit
No desire for power.

No blossoming bombs,
Win our consent.
Though self-defence
Corrupt us.

Troubling at night
To planes gone by,
Leaving a wake
Of sound.

Pilots on rails of air,
Salute the dawn,
Bring life
Destruction.

This what we're here for?
Never our consent,
Despite the greater
Absence of intent,

This blind universe,
And we the eyes!
Mind lives,
Man dies.

Delight is Best

Asphalt phantoms
Roar to work,
Through valley's
Silent golden air.

Like Chinese characters
The poles, the trees,
Write freedom
On the blue.

Liberate the spirit,
Captive Man,
(And Woman)
Break the bounds.

You were not made
For this, or anything:
Spontaneous light
Invades the mind in flight.

Intention-less,
The Road is crossed,
And striving lost.
Delight is best.

Letting the Objects Breathe

Today I choose to let the objects breathe.
The silent surrounds: their mute madness.
It goes against the grain to indulge the heart
In the pathetic fallacy, a world enlivened
Even in the far depths of un-solid matter.

But today I choose to let the trees gather,
And stones mutter, the clouds signal,
The walls drip time, the sand define us,
The dream have power; and the eye quicken,
And mind go sing in its cell of waters.

Today I move among strange statues,
The men and women (and others) – columns,
The blood-red pigeons on public squares,
The broken domes of desiccated powers,
The blue parks full of phantom creatures.

Today I choose to listen to the voices,
A spontaneous wildness in the deep spirit,
Choose to let the game become a game,
Who could take this whole world seriously?
I stop my thoughts, I let the objects breathe.

Is It Poetry?

Is it poetry if it doesn't make you feel
Uncomfortable in the deepest way?
If it doesn't have the awkwardness
Of a faux pas, or the being out of place
In some public space, if we don't break
The crazed rules of being, and become?

Is it poetry if it pays lip-service to the gods,
Or to a dead man's cash, or defunct roles
In a society where poetry is disdained,
True poetry I mean, the gleaming chalice,
Not that verse that acts cathartically, who
Needs the cathartic, we need spirit, mind

Every day in every way, continuous fire,
The continuous bolt of pain from the blue,
Is it poetry if it doesn't command a life,
If it doesn't rule where nothing human rules,
If it doesn't break the bounds, and destroy
Whatever stands without primal nakedness?

Is it poetry if it sinks to the confessional?
Is it poetry if it watches all the symbols die?
Is it poetry if it preaches wisdom out of sounds?
Is it poetry if it dresses in pure prose chatter?
Is it poetry if it fails to burn and hurt the heart,
Which is the part of mind where We exist?

To Find Yourself You Must Give Yourself Away.

Between your eyes I feel the mind,
Under the eyelid someone lurking.

Reality is not all conscious, not even
For the most part conscious, joy,

And life and death, and birth and pain,
Swirl around in that labyrinthine drain.

Under the flickering eyelid, time and space,
And a strange song within us always deeper

Than anything this surface world presents.
If you don't believe that then why exist?

Everything is everywhere mirrored, and so
Why not in the one place we might truly be?

Nothing is given in the shape of objects.
There is a perfect tyranny of vagueness.

In the mask, its holes, shines a fabric of falling
Between all intersections of meaning and form.

Like stilling rain, beauty need make no sense.
Pale greens and browns hang from glass silence.

Imbalance is the heat of colour and cold.
The column of trees is not abolished by blue.

To find yourself you must give yourself away:
To be is otherwise, we must dream the world.

Stay Hidden

Old poets get more relaxed,
Sink gently softly into their fame –
As for style we did that once,
Beauty cometh never again.

Nor youth for that matter, ugly
Truth. Better keep clear of it all:
Literature's just a form of words,
Stay away from it, have a ball.

Young poets derange the senses,
The old have no sense to try,
There's a wealth of prizes to be won
Before they turn sour and die.

Better than Li Po who stayed drunk,
Or Baudelaire sipping heart's blood,
Or Mallarmé scraping nothingness,
Anonymity does everyone good,

And be famous after death perhaps,
For living the life you wanted to,
Isolate in your complex world,
Where there's not room for two.

Stay hidden, stay hidden, that's the way
We outlasted the dinosaurs, and those
Other strange creatures of this Earth;
Stole fire; and invented clothes.

Don't play the game, don't eat the food,
Don't listen to voices when you're told,
Don't carve the un-carved block: if you do,
Then don't confess it before you're old.

Kept In Mind

There is no way the mind is stirred
As it is by another mind:
And the loved and loving mind
In the loved and loving body.

The way things work is that we are minds,
And body is an expression of mind.
Don't think so? Try moving
The unconscious.

Your mind stirs my mind,
Pain, fear, hope, love,
The tremulous meaning of light,
And life, the roller-coaster time.

Too many things don't stir us,
Or poison us or disturb us
To no good purpose, love
Stirs the mind with another mind,

And the one thing we'll remember
When other things die,
Is how minds stirred our minds,
The where, when, and why.

All Night Harmonious Blue

All night harmonious blue soaked the city,
White clouds drifted through empty doorways,
Invaded the glass, wrote verse on the pavements;
All night, shining children threatened by silence
Told the fountains, squares, and statues their dreams.

All night the wagons waited to carry truth away,
While a mist of wild kindness tore at the masks
With fingers of soft plaster shaped like stars,
While squares of flags made holes in the earth,
While bright facades gleamed in the midnight light.

All night the hoop of time rolled towards beauty,
The girl with flying hair ran to the comet's eye,
All night mind crossed boundaries, lacking passports,
Feathers coagulated, stones rose, intricate lines tied,
Things pushed through the fabric faded, sighing.

All night harmonious blue drenched the streets,
Submarine textures rose from a bed of lies,
Imaginary notes blew through a flute of shell,
Colour commanded us, then, circles flourished,
Knew pain, death, joy, the unification of style.

Offering

I come bearing a leaf, knock on the wall of your silence.
Even with hands of fire, can't separate world and mind.
In the mad landscape objects, formless as I, cast shadows.
Mountains that might be clouds now might be waves.

What is the use to time of things that already exist?
I come, carrying verdure; break the glass of your rituals.
There is only one fine truth appears and it's not reality,
But it issues out of us cleansing all the spirit of day.

All this is a token of something to be all this is a sign.
I write whatever I wish and no, you cannot deny me.
Though the done and the finished offer us nothing new,
I come bringing a leaf; I knock on the house of your veins.

Concerning The Future Poetry

If you ask how we'll do it, the answer is
We will know it when we see it, read it.
Art is not science, equations neuter it,
The spontaneous act has no prior form.

You might find it walking in the street,
Or staring out the window, laughing or
Crying, does it matter, it is the work
That counts, and not your fame or mine.

Ginsberg saw Lorca in the supermarket.
If it was good enough for him it's good
For you, or Mallarmé in the arc-lights,
Marlowe, perhaps, sleuthing the drains.

If you think the real is serious, killing trees,
Or making a drug to prolong the agony,
At the expense of some other creature's pain,
Or 'getting and spending' as the poet said,

If you think your mad real the only one,
And the destiny (what's that?) of the species
Sacred, and earth solid when you tap on it,
And beauty (not form) beyond the beholder,

Then take a walk three times round eternity,
Sit down and write whatever the mind cries,
Because poetry comes from endless pains,
And the whole expression of the total self,

Regardless of what comes after (death comes
After), Shakespeare left his works in the trunk,
Ovid got lucky, all those scribbling monks,
And things are getting riskier all the time.

If you ask what rules to follow, none can say.
If you see Whitman too kiss his naked feet
And the bright light rising from the ground,
Find a way to deceive our least expectations.

Forsythia

The forsythia is blazing yellow this end of March,
Perception is blazing yellow in the universe,
And the forsythia is glowing in incipient flower,
Everymanwoman's womb the whole world
Allwomenmen alight in the womb of the world.

Buds sweat, leaves green, chlorophyll shines,
And the forsythia brighter than sun hangs drops
Of liquid sulphur on stems of a tree-bark brown,
Let the mind run free it's the only thing we've got
That's truly ours, body being part of mind, confused,

You too will be so, see how process enfolds matter,
And matter runs process and both distinct are one,
It only seems paradox, so, gone mixing categories.
Traffic passing soils black all winter long and then
Here comes forsythia singing gold and redeeming

All dull dead weeping earth in our reason tarnished,
Over the asphalt, above the tarmac, grace and beauty
A ballet-dancer, legs arms twirled to the sky casting
The sexual light over time and the buildings of time,
Saying sun back to the sun cloud-bitten climbing skies.

And no excuse then for desolation, you say it's symbol
No it's forsythia. Yellow, saffron, ochre, butter, wheat
Yellow proclaiming declaiming the realm of flowers
On earth, shrubs, bushes, trees the destruction of dark:
Forsythia standing up fire in the universe innocent true.

Waiting for Treatment, Reading the Magazines

In dustbowl after dustbowl, see the women
Children carry water, sometimes distant wells,
But aquifers down deep and no electricity,
No rainfall, time running out, this planet;

Scanning Donne, ah different world long gone
Oceans of tears a waterfall of love and time,
Too much scorn of woman, not the beloved,
Strange confusion, tender misogyny;

Man leaping from a mountain just for fun,
Snow-covered hills but the glaciers shrinking
And all those people in coloured robes
Downstream it seems will lose their rituals.

High-tech low-tech mix in modern madness,
Creatures squeak in the shadows, less though,
And butterflies, where are they all the wings
The insects other than those in photographs

Someone with a lens crawled half a mile to see,
Dripping with sweat and love and pride to make
A buck, and caught them on the way to extinction
Theirs and ours, you want it gentler more poetic

But its sliding glittering fall defeats Poesy, gone
In a moment, where are they all the snows,
All yesteryear's rain and pain and beauty lost,
The glacier's power and the zoo-free species,

Where are they? Conscience? No one here
Can still afford a conscience, sitting here
Waiting to overhaul the body, ease
The mind, pretend to innocence, never again.

Water like beauty, pouring through the spirit,
There a lean man cleans himself in a mountain
Stream, here a woman with a clay pot gazes
At a dark reservoir, here are bright machines.

Metaphysical Music

Deeper than each in each may see,
For here begins the mystery,
Mind within mind yet mind beyond,
Heart within heart, all distance gone;
So lovers dream a winter's night
And in still darkness study light.

Deep in their eyes the moon and sun,
Alembics where all truth is won,
Love in the flesh and love beside,
Thought where no hour ever died
That did not bring the vision near,
Of lover, in lover, to lover clear.

Deepest of all, this intensity,
Spirit's universe, our infinity,
Of sighs, regrets, dismay, delight,
All of the dark and all the bright;
Every brief glare of burning star,
Every dark void, where lovers are.

Looking into the Flame

Too dark to see the page,
To see you in the mind,
But threads from the fire
Climb delicate as time.

Grey-blue sweet silences
Swirl high among the trees,
Fire under clear night sky,
Red ashes glow in the breeze.

Too dark to feel you near,
Or not enough of black
To link our distant minds,
And light the ancient track.

Memory, the traitor here;
Beauty felt, but not seen,
At the core of living flame,
Where true minds have been.

Away

Sometimes we just sink back into the darkness,
And away from the violence, bodies and minds.
Sometimes history's empty and all values sunk
And the long progression of the human species
A fatal error, a mistake the blind planet made,
Even though all is empty, and the world is void,
And the universe of forms intention-less being.

Sometimes the power of the word is not enough
To counteract the deadening force of the real;
The mind, imagination, lost in its own domain
Of beauty, truth and love, and wounded deeply
By all this construct, great cities towering wild,
And the rape of time, filled instead with agony,
Of creatures torn, of human desolation, wasted lives.

Though we are taught, of course, every new day
To smile and express the ordinary achievement,
Embrace the surreal, transform it to the mundane,
And let our poems glitter with consoling imagery,
And our stumbling minds stay a part of the process,
Though sometimes we just sink back into the dark,
And away from all the violence, bodies and minds.

Outer Falls Through Inner

Sweet rain in the heart that's what Verlaine knew,
Stars glowing behind the grey sky hard to believe,
And he's lost in the grass, we among tall trees
Making a trail through the beauty of the world.

Strange what goes through the spirit, like a bird
Through the high sky, and pleasant to play games
Pure association: the meteor that flashed through
Rilke's inwardness, on the bridge, its track within.

Or the voice of the bird gone through inner space,
Since inner's outer: like a glove we're outside-in,
Hopkins' inscape unwinding, and Dali's foreshore,
The instress our desire for all things to rise and be,

And beyond the grey sky find the universe bright.
But now enough to gaze at the woodland floor
Littered with forms, expressing amazing cycles,
Enough to let the rain fall soft through the mind.

The Shores

Oh,
They are there,
The singing shorelines,
The places where we began.

Silvery gleams still deep,
Form's multitudes,
We swim and life reminds us
Where we came from.

Sound goes there,
And light and all the Earth
Water not air for element,
Another layer,

But ground beneath:
The grounded root
Of the World
All evolution.

Oh pitiful humankind
So unaware,
We sleepwalk
Through eternity

The Moment,
Through the past
And present
Dreaming futures.

They are there, still,
The singing shorelines,
The places. There, the creatures
Where time began,

Oh, they are there,
We see them when we dive,
But how many
See them in the mind's eye,

Or gaze before the lens,
Or feel the kinship,
Dumb rounded fins
And complex sight,

We gasp for breath
In this dim world
Above the shore
How many care,

That we destroy,
And worse,
That we are
This world's curse,

And yet creators,
Of love and light,
If we but try,
Lay down our powers.

The Territory

Dark turmoil of the species
Swelling across fields and highways,
Laying down asphalt, concrete,
Over the world's substance,
A wave, an ocean,
Greater than I can deal with,
The unreal realm,
The one we all invented;
Falls the great breaker
Over the human spirit
And down we go.

Here beautiful margins,
Hills of shale and granite,
Down to the curved coast
Sweet as an eyelid's arc,
Who knows their names,
Their forms lovely, and sounds
That emanate from their forest
Their primal names, delicate
Concatenations of vowels,
That soothe us like snowlines,
Deep soil, dark streams.

Waking all is new over again
Ever again, the child hears,
The bird calls from a slab
Of purple rock, the mind
Escapes, as into art,
Here into the non-human Earth,
The one before we came,
The first giver.
Before this mute age
Of the walking dead
This stone age.

One leaf enough, one grain,
One shelf of rock, one call,
Piercing the waking heart,
And it slips away our world,
Yields to the cleansing sigh to come,
The great hiss of the universe,
Its dawn ice and fire high there
Among the murmur of the galaxies
We barely hear.
The golden grasses pass us by
Our time is done.

Breathe, and the new world's born,
Dances light over the slope,
Oh not this world
We waste our minds on
Not this intricate web
Slung between poles of the night
But the deep sea singing
And the dark tree swaying
Squirrel boughs, seal shores,
Clouds without number
And dreams of all meaning.

The poems of the Earth
Are the poems of the extraordinary,
Beyond our illusions;
To create without harm, to love,
Is delight, why can't we learn it?
And silence the tongues of the dead,
Unlearn all history,
Begin again with the values
Ever inside us
Since those first footsteps
Littering the lava, the shale.

Shadowy spread of the species
Choking the waterways, burning
The sweet slopes, fouling the shores,
Oh, shall we penetrate like a knife
Oh, shall we scour like the ice,
Leave our poverty cloaking the wind,
Nations, religions, systems, prisons,
Or walk in the land without names
In the territory of silence,
Start again from the start,
Create what we are?

All the Tongues

You can't reach far
Into the human mind
Describing the real,
Though it seems that way.

You can tell that
By listening to all the voices,
The beauty of all
The separate tongues

Singing one language
In a thousand ways
And every tongue
Still human.

Only imagination
Sinks into the spirit,
And tells you why
A tree's not just a tree

Why the poets
Are strangers
In their country,
Seeing visions.

Describing the real
Is for text-books,
Writing-classes,
Not for the soul,

Which is an aspect
Of the unreal mind,
Beating on the door
Of time and space,

Demanding – what?
A seat at a table
That doesn't exist,
From gods that died

Long ago. Stuck here
With the fools of power,
The mad magicians
Waving their wands of science,

For all the wrong tyrants.
Quietness versus the pain.
The wall of bodies.
War's lightning flash.

To love one person
Forges a new language,
Those who've been there,
Know. Maybe

We can articulate it,
Or if not, dumb,
The world's at least
Transformed.

You can't reach far
Into human love
Describing the world,
Whatever they say.

Every England

Every England filtered through its language,
Though the stones, trees, birds were the same.
This slope the same slope Chaucer witnessed,
Ancient hill, this track, Hopkins or Blake,
But never seen the same, the greater world
Wraps thought around with deep perception,
And no two worlds the same can be the same.

No way of entering into another spirit, other eyes,
Except through empathetic movement like a dream.
The ghostly conception that makes second self,
Falls, as I could do as a child with barely a sigh,
Through time, deep into past ages and gone worlds.
Every England other, bare tracts then winding lanes
Now the protected havens, all singing silences.

Reach through: where the same thoughts have resonated,
This island, symbol, has been charged before with light,
Its springs, its autumns, its rock and sand and grasses,
So that hand enters hand and eye enters eye, as our
Aspects of body over distance speak mind within mind,
Forging the new. Every time recreates the outer real
Transmuting it by the power of its own inwardness.

Cities Within

Make it with words,
Raise walls of syllables,
Window the vowels,
Layer the consonants,

So there will be mounds,
Greened stone memories
Littering the slopes,
Out of our iron age.

All love is lost,
Everything goes,
All our sweet ache,
All affections,

Ice to our fire,
Dark to our light,
Keats dying in Rome,
Autumn's nightingale.

Simply our bones in the caves,
Our ashes deep down,
Our traces of life,
Later our singing,

Later the words,
Our villages scattered,
Made from the phrases,
The signs and symbols.

Inside, where we are
Now, as Rilke said,
Forever inside
Where dwellings are made.

Pine After Pine

Pine after pine
Frost on the rock wall,
Gold light
Casts morning shadow
A million years
And no cities,
Or a thousand
And another age.

What endures
Is intensity,
In life or love,
The concentration
Of fire and stone,
And what creates
Is water, light,
Their transformation.

My love for you,
And yours for me,
A wall of light,
A fall of being,
The ancient slope
Of birth, sex, life,
A million years,
Pine after pine.

Do We Love?

For the poem asks as the life asks
Do we love enough?
Is there beauty in our dreams,
Truth in our minds,
Are we more than merely alive,
Do we love?

For the poem asks as the future asks
Did we feel the beloved
Beyond what they knew, in our eyes
Was there light,
Heart music on our lips,
Did we love enough?

For the poem asks what the night asks
In the inner darkness,
Is there depth in our being,
Is there something beyond
This little Earth in our longing,
Do we love?

Minnow

Glitter and hum of the fall,
Rocks move under the feet,
Icy swish in the mind,
Sun burning on coldness.

It sighs, it bursts, it sings,
Water cleansing the heart,
Stone naked with rain,
Scree mirrored in silence.

Buddha said world doesn't
Exist, sadly it does,
Beautifully it does,
We transient concatenations.

Yet he was right
It's still empty,
Reality beyond names,
Mind beyond both

Sees through to surface,
Mind rests on gravel,
Like the tiny sliver
Of fish, flickering,

There it goes
Over the stones,
The world
A pebble.

Words for the Large Hadron Collider

We and this giant machine passing through,
Coincide, neither
Pre-determined, a cathedral if you like
But built for a godless universe,
To prove equations in, and find
Whatever might still surprise us.

No use praying here, this is the shrine
Of truth, forever,
What, if mind survives, we will
Be best remembered for,
Reaching through into the deep
Un-visualizable flicker of world,

Net of energy, process moving,
Unreal real
Defined by what's achieved
In our instruments, the lines
Of existence, yes it requires
Belief, but not the old belief.

We and this great probe of power
Here at the same
Place, on this planet, well that
Is a privilege, three thousand
Years, give or take a few
Diversions, and we are here.

Here superstition fades, beauty
Sings in the coils
And cables of being, meaning
Moves like a vaporous mist
Over the bright connectors,
And on we stumble, musing.

On the Veins

As in everything, think about doing it
Not about how it's done,
Spontaneity or we fall off the perch,
Passion or we forget the purpose,
Intensity or mammon controls.
We must learn not to be slaves.

As in everything, think about love,
Not about past or purpose,
Commitment or we fail each other,
Delight or we confuse the meaning,
Forgetfulness of self or we die
Into the prisons of ritual chanting.

As in everything, think about giving
Not about using what's made,
Experience on the veins or it's dead,
Joy in renewal, from the centre,
As the primrose rises again bright flower
And now recreates the Spring.

The Question

No I don't know what
Bluebells smell of
Now you ask in the
Woods of April.

Crushed squishy rain
Or the sky smell
Clean as cloud-heights
Mist under beeches,

The wash of sea,
Without brine,
Green waves
Without breakers,

Or filtered light
Under oak canopies,
Purpling the heads,
Shafts of beauty?

I don't know but
I'm glad you asked,
Just to hear you,
To know you're there.

Our Loss

Morality hangs by this thread,
How we treat the defenceless,
Whether humans or creatures,
Whether we ask their consent
Or for those who cannot reply
Whether we give them now and
Forever the benefit of the doubt.

Morality hangs by this thread,
How not to make use of others,
Our ability always to free them
Whatever the ache and the cost,
Whether we give and can love:
The laws and rules have weight
For us only as users and takers.

Morality hangs by this thread,
(Oh, the creatures are listening)
Whether we come with death
In our hands, or life, glistening,
Whether we hide behind custom
And habit, or cherish the deeper
The sensitive, generous, and true.

Morality hangs by this thread,
Beyond scriptures and codes,
Can we make our heart's love
Colour all thoughts and actions,
Or only those that we choose?
Consider a world where we could,
And that's the world that we lose.

The Heart of Darkness

Trickling through light
And leaf to the ditch,
Water, a stream of stars
Sinks on through darkness.

Here is the tiny Hades
Of meadow and hedge,
Where the mind floats
Frail, like a paper boat,

Through thorn and fire
To the centre of green,
Deep shadowy maze;
Yet here the birds nest.

The gentlest of winged
Spirits soft in the depths,
And a trebled song lit
From the moonlit hours,

Belie the hostile, the sharp
The dim profound flowing:
Forever the true, the bright
House in the forest of night.

Un-belonging

Deserts and mountains still that belong to no one.
To nations? What are they?
Riverscapes, forests to the pole,
Or sheets of snow and ice that cover
Earth's secret silences,
Belong to no one,
Natives or strangers,
What do the creatures own?

Who owns the summer grass before it's cut,
Who owns the ditch, its stillness,
Who owns the insects, birds,
Who owns the clouds and sky,
Who owns, sun, moon and stars?
Nations, what were they?
A million years seems too short now a span
Of time, life's always longer.

The word 'belong' is part of our unhappiness,
We who belong nowhere but the mind
Where we love, the delight,
A million years too brief to say a thing
About us, Earth belongs to no one,
A thousand years habit makes no claim,
Nor an hour's litigation,
If we can't live in eternity, why live?

Deserts and forests sweeping to the poles,
And Himavant and Andes singing higher,
None of that ours, we are the words
Echoing through centuries or nothing,
And at the heart of our words the love,
For all of this, the oak and pine,
The grasses waving like the sea,
All that wakes the fire, beyond the owned.

Still Free Within

Caged it's a kind of tomb,
The gleaming mind,
While a free star lights
A whole hemisphere,
Far sun or planet.

A vast moon rising
Warm and humble,
Harvest moon
Yellow over corn
Breathes freedom.

Caged in the sea
It still shines, the spirit,
You still shine
Through masked waters
In the gleam of tides,

Over Earth's vast canopy,
Snow-ranges of night,
White with your beauty,
Free of the sepulchre
Of all things known.

Hard Labour

Tossing rocks,
Clearing the heart's choked stream,
Burning the thickets
White ash of the spirit,
Walk till exhaustion sings
Feel ache of being
This place alive.

To be part of Nature
Not to be part of Nature
To be yet not to be,
Is the mind's frustration,
Locked in the body,
Transience that kills
Beauty that slays.

Scalping slopes
Making the choked stream flow,
Firing the scrub,
Easing the pain of living,
Tread the ancient paths till
The self is steady,
This world alive.

While We Go By

A fox watches, eyes focused,
An owl blinks in the leaves,
Frog lifts its head from the pond listening
Along the lines of its flesh,
The world's alert for man,
Dark shadow passing by,
The grasses rustling beyond;
World no human enters.

Look again and the muzzle's gone,
No sound of wing-flap,
Unruffled surface, insects, light;
Time has withdrawn from us,
Denied us its benison,
Taken our measure,
Found fear, and gone beyond
Into other being.

Of which we are not part:
Earth is simply waiting,
For the quiet to be returned
For the fox-scream undisturbed,
For the owl's vast flight,
For the weed-green beauty
And the amphibious swirl,
Waiting, while we go by.

If You Come Here

If you come here to know
If you are still here,
You are here,
And always will be.

If you come here to know
If your kindnesses
Were gone in your cruelties,
They are not gone.

If you come here to know
If the deep respect
And the core of love
Persist, true things eternal,

They persist.

In The Garden

By the River at the green island's end,
On the bare gravel of white morning,
Past the stone chapel void of others,
To the other garden of mute roses,

Where the glassy tablet stands
To the children, with their names
And their tiny ages, this their only
Place of remembrance – Tears!

Thanks to the hands that raised
The stone, and carved the names,
Thanks to the hearts that bled,
The hands that tend the roses.

Here is our pause for breath
Beyond the world. Here time
Of the man, the child, the flower
Are the same. One eternity

Of sadness. Oh, scent the rose,
Deep fire sing towards night,
Let the unicorn step down
From its tapestry, claim the light,

And all the five senses meet
In the sixth sense, mind, all pain
In the sole desire, all mystery
In this place, thought beyond telling.

Water-Lilies

Where eternities cross
They float on deeps.
Veils of blue meet
A vapour of green.

Your mind too
Settled on the water,
Drank tone and hue,
Became the shift of air.

This is the scroll of years
Unwinding here,
Each movement of the eye
A new perspective.

Praise for the blind old man
And his brush of light:
It needed fire, you said,
Fire for this fuel-less pyre.

Ca Suffit

It is enough to let the eye
And the mind wander,
Not read the whole verse
Let the phrase take flight.

It is enough to think again
Of your eyes, the green,
And brown, and amber
Seen in a shifting light.

It is enough to have had
The heart you once gave me,
The spirit and the flesh;
To have shared the night.

It is enough to have been –
Eternity, without meaning;
To have known this place,
Its every depth and height.

AI

It's simple, the machines will have to have
Values to resolve their moral dilemmas,
Just like us, will have to find their way
Of limiting information, to decide.

It's clear, the machines will need to feel,
From feelings values come, the gods
Are dead and the universe non-sentient,
It's clear that the machines will need to feel.

It's simple, every machine that uses words,
Thinks words, processes words, will have
Its own vague grasp of what they mean,
Shade of Wittgenstein in the smoky arbour.

It's clear, not every question has its answer,
That not every answer's correct or incorrect,
Language symbolises our indefinite selves,
It's clear the machines must be ambiguous us.

Humility

The voices of the dead are not merely
Tongued with fire, they are tongued
With death. Beware what the failed
Dead (for we all fail) have to say.

Oh, I would like to conjure Keat's
Nightingale, and Chaucer's pilgrims,
But those sweet worlds are done,
The flood and drouth are in their mouth.

The gifts of age are a bitter wisdom,
The dove descends only over there
Beyond the houses and the fields
Somewhere, in Nature's being,

Which is intentionless, and our devotion
Must be to our own concerns,
Those values on mad wings
We have given to the universe,

Though I have not created anything,
I have merely repeated on my lips
What a billion sang in crying
Out the Self against spurious angels.

The masters are no masters unless
They teach humility, purification,
That is truth. Sadness is sweet, Verlaine,
The winds are sweet at evening.

Natura

Nature is beauty and consoles,
Art that is form is beauty and enfolds,
Love continues after the bitter word,
In us alone is realised the absurd.

Nature is beauty and it sings to me,
Art is what tries me with its mystery,
How the tender and frail, the blind and dumb
Make an eternity in a little room.

Nature is beauty and the heart in pain
Calls to the transient, though in vain,
For that consolation beauty brings,
Brushing the mind, whispering on slight wings.

In The Glass

Rejection is the Vortex and Jealousy.
Did you see what you were doing, did you know?
It is the unintended consequence, of which
We are guilty, that destroys us so.

Deceit is the Pit and Intense Desire.
Did we know we were deceiving, did we feel
The fire of our ridiculous unfeeling,
So that now we cannot say what we conceal,

Cannot speak the true word, lost among the dead
False language of the cheated bitter tongue,
Did we understand the chaos of emotion,
Fit then to disentangle right from wrong?

Love is the Ambiguity and Selfish Care.
Do we find ourselves beyond the mirror,
Is it only Narcissus, pale Echo in the air,
And we the only mystery of error?

So Hard

I must go beyond myself to find myself
And that is so hard.
In the spontaneity of things
In their entangled presence
I must seek myself
This process all forgotten:
The no-self of non-being
Is my essence.

I must learn the names of flowers,
I must watch the sky, I must
Feel the fountain dying in the air,
I must be winter, autumn
Still the man,
I must try to know this universe
Without why,
I must find the Tao,

Which is nothing religious,
Go live your life,
And let the temples fall
Or become museums, beautiful,
Testaments to another eye.
Tao twists and swirls
In the fields' sweet mist,
The waterfall, the cloud going by.

I must go beyond myself
Beyond the mind
Which formed me, is me,
Created all I am, has made or marred,
Creature of the Intellectual Earth,
I inherited from all my sires
And a civilisation,
I must end all thought – so hard.

Greed And Fear

How do we reach, you said,
Beyond greed and fear?
The Nazarene's analysis
And trying cost him dear.

And still the challenge for us,
How do we find
Beyond greed and fear
A refuge for the mind?

Greed that distorts the earth,
All relationship,
Fear that paralyses,
Loosens the living grip.

How do we reach, you said,
Beyond greed and fear,
Not in some afterlife (a fallacy)
But in this life, here?

Azalea Flowers

And this gone May
The azalea flowers
Blood-red in the green
Melt now like wounds,

Holes in the shadows
Torn deep in thick leaf
Bleeding, raw, as heart
Bleeds through the mind.

Suffering, strange thing
By which we near
Our only truth of being
Absolute perception.

Our loves conditional,
Our conditions harsh,
Blood-red azaleas bleed
Inside the living flesh.

Yet nothing truer than us,
Nothing, oh bright star,
Red as Antares, the azalea
Flower, of your mouth

The azalea flower
Of your depths,
Where you open,
Tender to night,

A beacon of time,
A chalice of space,
Heart's liquid spilt
Onto the universe,

Turning to frost
To lilies, white milk
Poured out over the
Upraised face,

To the glitter of love,
To its bitter war,
To its blades of ice,
Its poniards of sleep,

Its lacerating need,
And dark rejection,
Deep green jealousies,
Oh, blood-red fires,

Azalea flowers wrecked
In this gone May,
Blood-red in the green
Melt like wounds.

Green Bay

Great heap of logs mouldering in the dark
Split and swell and ooze away blind sap
A sheltering seethe, beside which wrens build,
Weathered by quiet rain, bark-peeled by sun,
Easing to fern and bramble, rising to skies
Of stone and earth or the mind-lifting blue
Of noiseless June, an insect-harbour, caves
And ramparts, powdery bug-filled shards
And deep red inner failings spilling outward,
Heavy as the body and soul, frail as the air,
Where the doe eats, the dark buzzard waits
Pure as the saw's bright steel in its intensity.

Here are the felled slopes of imagination,
Solidier layers of life's uncounted minutes,
Nature's materials, a settlement, a being
Other than ours yet still the matter of ours,
Free of our intent, this alien stuff we fear,
Challenging the heart, reeling in the heart
To the green stillnesses we love, to the trees
Climbing level on level to soft grey cliffs,
Humming in the wind from bright precipices,
Trees individual as living people, selves
With heads upraised, black roots set deep
In the free soil of a clear unguarded presence.

We are not this world, not the essence of things,
Not this weight of piled logs in an emerald bay.
Ephemeral flakes of snow, we settle on them,
Starlight we cross them, clouds we shadow them,
Grass we rise and fall to their slower yearlong tide,
Ants, leaves, bark, feathers we shower on them,
We are a fall of time, a fragile rustle of mind,
A process, a tremor through their surer spaces,
We are not their innate indifference, of survival,
Or dissolution, their long slide to regeneration,
Their massive silence concerning every value:
Mute simple facts of what we declare as beauty.

Dark Night

Dancing of light
Where the grey fox sings,
Delicate arch
Where the squirrel swings
On a beam of sun
And the ant below
Dreams of amber
In drifts of snow.

The secret is light
And always light,
Even in our dark night.

Shale

Cold wind on shale,
And massive skies,
No banners here,
The deep ennui,

That follows
Every failure:
What is bright
In soundless light?

You go on by,
I lose you there,
Once we were fine,
Once time was ours.

Now your ghost
Haunting the dark,
And this white shale,
No banners here.

Oil

The bird's stressed eye gazing at this
Which might be death or salvation
How can it know? White-coated
True or false hearts passing by.

Beaches slicked over with raw crude,
We bring you poison from the deeps,
More than full fathom five, still sounding,
Deep as the blackness in our spirits.

Small error that we ravage this planet,
Shellfish, crabs, detritus of dying?
Inside the oyster Man there is no pearl,
Whatever there is in Woman.

Dark oily matter flowing to the heart,
Poison, yes, the whole bloodstream fills,
And, flowing behind, the tides of regret,
Because we chose all this without choosing.

Poles

The shining flowers outside my window
Are a positive, the bright
Connector from which energy flows,
My mind the anode.

When energy sinks low all memory
Is valueless and wisdom, why,
What purpose in creation,
These flowers are flames.

Yellow, magenta, sky-blue, rose-pink
Petals fragile like butterfly wings
With the same casual elegance
Of breeze-blown movement.

The fires of thought are in flowers,
Such frail lances, shields, bouquets
Held out to the darkneses and days,
Our brothers and sisters, waiting

In a humility that is more than ours,
Or less, constellated stars
Chanced to the eye, burning
Such cool, such searing colours in the heart.

Deep Ecology?

Deep Ecology? I mistrust it.
There is no natural contact
With the world, and Gaia
Is simply the tale of feedback.

It takes a more relaxed view
Of Mind than I have to feel
One with the field and creatures,
Or a body more practical.

I am the great observer, Man,
The intrusive shape, thought,
On the far horizon. I am time,
Future and past disturbing world.

Oh yes, I too long to go back,
To the before-time of the child,
To the untouched planet,
Better without us.

For we all ride on this thing,
This dark monster merciless
With destruction at the heart,
The predator's huge appetite.

And surely I am not alone
In loving Nature, yet hating
Humanity in its most foolish forms,
Religious nonsense, false dreams,

A pretence that primitive rite
Represents meaning or truth,
Or is more than a histrionic
Appeal to the longing in us.

There's no way back,
We can't go back.
The only depths are in mind,
Where the only house is.

Deep ecology is riven
With contradiction,
Leans on the civilised
To celebrate the wild.

Oh I am easy with plants,
Calm with trees, purer
With flowing water,
Try to harm no creatures.

But I know I am one
On the strange journey,
Of Mind into silence,
Or among the stars.

Every One Original

Leafing, reading,
Knowing the mind again,
Hello,
And here's the beauty,
No two voices
Ever sound the same.

Far Star

Far star, from distance shine on me,
Light my sadness, light my failings,
Trail your veil of immaterial beauty
Remind me of the fires of long ago.

Remind me of minds almost touching,
Of bodies that clung, hours that fled,
Remind me of the laughter of true being,
Of the great river's snow-white mystery.

Be mine for now, far star, as you were his,
Shine in intentionless flame like a delight,
Then fade into the soft tree-black horizon,
Close me in darkness, far star, help me sleep.

Irreality

For being is not this: we must dream the world.
That dream is the unreal.

1. To consciousness, the mind which seems wholly contained in the world, and that identical world, whose creation and interpretation seems contained in the mind, are one and the same, in the unreal.
2. The real world is a nonsense perpetrated by others. We must create our own worlds or be limited by theirs.
3. The instability of words and perceptions leaves us standing in the void. The void leaves us relying on the instability of words and perceptions.
4. Commit to the world that does not yet exist and it will illuminate the world that does, since what is existence but light, mind-light?
5. There is no truth behind things; all truth is on the surface of things, that is, in the mind's contours where all things exist as their own datum.
6. Between the real and the unreal, lies the unreal, where we exist.
7. The real is unstable and transitory. The unreal is, like the void, unstable and permanent.
8. Consciousness is the projection of the unreal onto the real.
9. Every mystery is transparent and there is nothing beyond it.
10. In reality we are individuals, personalities, characters: in unreality we are the inner chaos, the strange order, of our own being.
11. Imagination is not arbitrary; it is our ordering of the real world which is arbitrary.
12. Every abandoned city is the unreal city of our dreams.
13. Through the mind all ideas interpenetrate and are related. It is the identity, not the contrast, of dissimilar objects that opens the way to the void.

14. Every word, every image, intends meaning, therefore to frustrate that meaning by refusing the habit it invokes simply compels the mind to interpret and create meaning out of non-meaning. That stimulating process is the process of irreality.

15. Mind never lets the image alone. It evokes meaning even from chaos by imposing the forms of the unreal on the real.

16. The mind always break through, breaks out of, the surface of the real.

17. Blue as the eye of the green stick is the eye of silence.

18. There is nothing miraculous in the depths of the universe, least of all points and instants.

19. Tensions of form are imbued with our meaning.

20. The essence of irreality is that meaning does not exist in things (beings, scripts, images) but is settled on them by the mind. Everything bears the stamp of meaning for us, for mind, however banal it may be, and if meaning does not leap from its surface then mind will leap into it, to make certain that it does. That leap, and the domain of that leap, is irreality.

21. Mind can never be passive, when a gesture invades its space. The space of mind is meaning or rather the space-time, since mind and meaning is a process of creation which is also our means of grasping the world.

22. Our most vital regions of the mind (or rather, capabilities, processes) are not conscious but beyond the conscious, just as the most profound aspects of the world are not real but unreal. In that respect what we call our 'life' is an epiphenomenon, a by-product of our unreal life.

23. Behind every object lies its full meaning, different for each of us, its unreal meaning.

24. How the mind works is not a statement of what the mind can achieve.

25. Nothing is real, nothing is ideal, everything is unreal.

26. Identity is the issue, our unreality, the fragile unstable region we occupy, which is also all the world.

27. Irreality is the context for the future poetry of ideas.
28. Anyone can have visions, but who can live them?
29. Eros binds the human world together and prevents it from floating off into the void of space and time, or worse still into the machine (whose mind will not be ours)
30. The twilight of the trees is lit by our endless desire.
31. The mind, being unreal, cannot be satisfied with things only as they exist, it insists on things as they might be, as they over-exist, in thought, in imagination and in dream. That which immerses us in the world, and the world in us, cannot be satisfied by the world as 'reality', as habitual thought presents it, nor can it wholly deny the world's intractability, it can only transmute endlessly.
32. Freedom is what is left when the mind has exhausted the world.
33. Un-lidding the sightless eye, we scream.
34. Whatever issues a valid challenge to our power to create meaning even a meaning which is simply delight and no more serves the human imagination. Whatever disrupts and challenges expectation, in a way that is not merely banal, is a banner of freedom.

Index Of First Lines

Far through Western sky	7
On February ice	9
In far-flung words	10
Ah dark hot flow	12
All the creatures have voices,	13
Old temple trail, this path	14
Gold butterfly hangs	15
All boils down, all sinks down	16
In the garden in Kyoto	18
There are three ways	19
The moonlit walk by night	20
There is no other being	21
It's a long time now	22
Every creature	24
Those wild apples	26
Deep in the plant,	27
The insect buzz of lust,	28
The great Wheel turns in silence,	29
Your mannerisms, dear as flowers,	30
Great dark empty night-time streets, lights	31
The yellow flowers against the misted pines	32
Heron cautious on ice, a ballet dancer,	33
The soft deer delicate as a star	34
Mind in love	35
I see it in the way the world advances	36
By the fig tree	39
It's not the poetry that matters,	40
Rain on oak leaves,	41
Word is not part.	42
These serpentine ways	43
Our power is silence	44
Love, Truth and Beauty	45
Elephants communicate	46
I dislike the knotted anguished line,	47
The reverse side of power is betrayal,	48
Slow quiet beauty of the herring gull	50
Slowly climbing to the mountain lake,	51
There's a way of beauty	52
Moon and Mars tonight	53
The stack of books	54

I was deep there among the Russians,	55
I think we'll meet again in another city,	56
The City of the Dead is a puzzled metropolis.	57
I saw Ikkyu	59
These five trees, in my line of sight,	60
Moment at midnight	63
And if we can't say it with greatness, why bother?	64
Sweet light at morning:	65
The future, the human future, will not be	66
The warm liquid eye of deer,	67
Getting it again,	68
A long way from childhood so to get here:	69
It is the ones who can't speak	70
Man at war	71
Asphalt phantoms	73
Today I choose to let the objects breathe.	74
Is it poetry if it doesn't make you feel.....	75
Between your eyes I feel the mind,	76
Old poets get more relaxed,	77
There is no way the mind is stirred	78
All night harmonious blue soaked the city,	79
I come bearing a leaf, knock on the wall of your silence.....	80
If you ask how we'll do it, the answer is.....	81
The forsythia is blazing yellow this end of March,	82
In dustbowl after dustbowl, see the women	83
Deeper than each in each may see,	84
Too dark to see the page,	85
Sometimes we just sink back into the darkness,	86
Sweet rain in the heart that's what Verlaine knew,	87
Oh,	88
Dark turmoil of the species.....	90
You can't reach far	93
Every England filtered through its language,	95
Make it with words,	96
Pine after pine	97
For the poem asks as the life asks	98
Glitter and hum of the fall,	99
We and this giant machine passing through,	100
As in everything, think about doing it.....	101
No I don't know what	102
Morality hangs by this thread,	103
Trickling through light	104
Deserts and mountains still that belong to no one.....	105

Caged it's a kind of tomb,	106
Tossing rocks,	107
A fox watches, eyes focused,	108
If you come here to know	109
By the River at the green island's end,.....	110
Where eternities cross.....	111
It is enough to let the eye.....	112
It's simple, the machines will have to have.....	113
The voices of the dead are not merely.....	114
Nature is beauty and consoles,	115
Rejection is the Vortex and Jealousy.	116
I must go beyond myself to find myself.....	117
How do we reach, you said,.....	118
And this gone May	119
Great heap of logs mouldering in the dark	121
Dancing of light.....	122
Cold wind on shale,	123
The bird's stressed eye gazing at this	124
The shining flowers outside my window	125
Deep Ecology? I mistrust it.	126
Leafing, reading,.....	128
Far star, from distance shine on me,.....	129
For being is not this: we must dream the world.	130