

Freedom and Meaning

λάθε βιώσας – ‘Hide your life’.

Epicurus

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Op. 132

No explosion into space, but space created.
Expansion blown forever from within.
There is no boundary, no edge
Every single locus is its centre.

Dark matter coalesces with the bright,
Dark energy pushes things apart.
In sickness the mind collapses,
Now it climbs again to ancient freedom.

Strange to gaze into the far deep field,
Look back; those pulses in the infra-red
Declare something stranger than time,
Or the variable stretches of light,

More the irredeemably non-human,
More the intense intellectual cold,
A murmur of unsatisfied equations,
That fall short still of the mystery.

From the starlight to the mind,
From the mind then to the score,
Instruments and purpose combined,
A movement intricate in time.

Here are voices, is it a sole voice?
These are voices rising from the wood,
The strings, the bowed heads,
The bowed minds, listening,

Or is it all one, the ear, the eye, the mind,
The body and the bow,
Until the first intent is clear;
From universe to universe, the flow,

Carried outside death, now here through time,
Down the outspread page,
To cry, and praise, and vocalise,
To utter?

Bend to hear the primal universe,
Bend to catch from world to mind to ear,
To instrument to score, the flow;
And then from score to player's eye,

To mind, to ear, to instrument,
This involuted circulation,
This orbiting of light and fire,
In streams of re-creation.

Escape from time, in time,
Is the first freedom.
Escape from death to life,
From illness to pure being,

From deep field to creation,
From creation to true time,
From time to the absolute performance
In this small hushed space.

From performance to the listener's ear,
To the mind
Projecting the sky's cerulean blue
Through silent windows,

Imagining a night sky
Over tundra,
An intentionless far dark,
Of inanimate motion,

Its depths where we exist,
The forms we stare at,
A creation-less music we praise,
Beyond the music,

Out of the heart
Then to the heart,
A finest flower
Of blue Earth: its human tremor.

Mind In Its Essence

Sky in September blue,
Pale isles of white cloud
Spreading an inner grey,
Rise on the far horizon.

Mind is free of purpose
Freed by intentionless space,
Free of the transfixed self,
Free to assert its values.

The light falls deep in the trees,
Shines on the back of leaves,
This yellowed oozing light
Of marvellous September.

Mind set free of its prisons,
History, power, illusion.
All meaning created by mind;
Mind in its essence – meaning.

Nowhere To Go, Everything To See

There, at the end of space, the light is calm.
How the enhanced humans will long
For the motions of the heart, for poetry
In the spirit of the superseded species!
How the heart will long for past
Innocence and the simple beauty
Of a done world transformed in time!

There, at the end of space, there is nothing
New in the heart, simply the old sweetness.
The Classics echo: Confucius knows
The need to conserve the deeper dream,
In the tinkling of the ritual called life.
The Classics echo: and Rome delights
In honeying the drama of the Greeks,

Forever. Nothing-truly-new is freedom,
Nothing new in the heart that is, except
Maybe the unanticipated horrors,
The new terrors, but nothing new
Of sincerity, affection, the eye's resilience.
Still beautiful here at the end of time,
Before the end of my time, still alive,

With what we never came for, creation,
Our creation, and the creatures before us,
The crying of the strangeness of 'to be'
In the infinite freedom of the void,
In the delightful tremor of the abyss.
You, of the future: here are the guardians,
The makers of the meaning of the mind.

Matter Is Spirit In Process

Consciousness, awareness is simply this,
The projection of meaning onto the world,
In the irreality of mind fused with being,
Process with matter, process of matter.

Memory is always this, our rehearsal,
Of what the flickering meant, the store
Of potential meanings, of the shadows,
To enable us to re-enact, then act.

Mind is always this, the theatre
Of our drama, and we, as Pasternak
Once said, are on stage in every act,
As Hamlet, wandering through the dark.

Time and space are always this,
Great surprise, the continuing surprise,
Unsettling and disturbing of the Now,
The quantum tremor, the displays of light.

I am always the mind and its memories,
The matter and the program it performs,
The unpredicted, never pre-determined
Oscillation of the protons and the dream.

Stuck In Gaol In Rome

There's a way of writing about fields
And streams, that cheats the reality.
The natural life is dull; if the world
Is beautiful, it is the aesthetic carries

All the meaning, not the life there.
We sit in cities, talk about the high
Mountain peaks, they're in the mind,
Where all our values are, shining.

There's a way of writing about
A rural pastoral world, like Virgil
Offering the Georgics to a busy Rome,
A solace for the Imperial nightmare.

But the pastoral is in the mind,
And charm, seductive, charms
Our thoughts away, if we relax
One moment from the mystery,

Which is the challenge of the new,
A search for freedom, liberty of thought
From our own thoughts, the dark
Matter of the feelings and the web,

Its silken threads, so beautiful
Drifting in mists of light across
The gorse. In the Imperial 'gaols',
The prisoners laughed at all the charm,

The sycophantic praise of ugly men,
Wielding a power too great for sanity.
I'm with Propertius, not Virgil:
Smirking as the triumph passes by.

Oh, Literature!

Here is the assiduous gatherer
Of his own myth.
He comes striding across the fields,
Swinging his memories,

Which are no doubt false,
Since writers are all liars:
The language twists
And turns in the mind,

Like Grendel in Beowulf's grip,
And escapes to gnaw
The hero's head off,
But not in the epic.

Here is the cultivator
Of the perfect reputation,
The apotheosis of the social,
The celebrator of ritual.

On the lonely moor
Emily scribbles light.
Anne's hand trembles
Under the papers.

Death catches them short
Of debilitating fame.
I go there to refresh my spirit,
With John Keats and Cavalcanti.

It's Tough

Tough to contemplate the dead, the raped,
The tortured and the starving.

Tough to consider a planet now unfit
For human consumption, soon consumed.

Tough to gaze at the empty beauty,
The quantum flicker, the seething void.

Tough to be mindful of the past,
The parade of glories dependent on power.

Tough to imagine the future of the species,
Lonely among stars, melds of enhanced matter.

Tough to be going before all the joy is over,
Tougher to live forever, shuddering.

Tough to be blessed with what we created
We and the long line of creatures before us,

The beauty, the love, and the meaning,
Given to the stars, freely, endlessly

Tough to be human.

Little Song Of Immortality

We are programmed for immortality.
Life itself is tuned for survival,
Darwin patiently explained.

Curiosity, cunning, cooperation
Aspects of the program of the species,
Tune us for immortality.

And now the way appears:
The conscious machine,
Projecting meaning on the world,

Becomes a receptacle for mind,
Our minds or its mind, no matter,
Metal, plastic, cell or whatever,

Replaceable, undying shell of being,
In which mind rides to immortality.
Don't ask the purpose.

The purpose is the program.
Survival is a no-end in itself.
See, there we go, sailing

Through infernity.
Behind, somewhere, the heart
The moral heart of all the meaning.

You, the ones who live forever,
Remember
We who only lived a little while.

Part Of the Choosing

There's no fixed self, we're free.
Within a boundary.

The one self fluctuates,
As the unseen dictates.

Through us and not despite
The worlds emerge to light.

In everything I will to be
The universe is willed in me.

Everything's determinate
Within the traveller at the gate.

The free is not the random, true,
Nor pre-determinate in you.

It's in the Now world comes to be,
And so it does in you and me.

Though all things ran on rails of steel,
The eye would see, the mind would feel.

Oh we are free, have no doubt,
Morality will find us out,

Caught between the right and right,
Or wrong and wrong, we seek the light.

And freedom is the choice we make,
For truth for love for beauty's sake.

Delicacy In Evening Air

Did I set you free? Did you set me free?
We lie down in the grasses of night;
They smell of ash and absence,
We lie down in the tender night.

There are fingers of darkness between us,
Whorls of the hurricane,
Great mouths of the snow-falls,
And the sigh of the endless plains.

Who is free? Not us, not ever.
Bound by invisible chains
In the sweet counter-fugue of night,
In the downfall of light.

Our punishment for life,
And our reward,
The swift roar
Of the moment going by,

And losing itself softly
Among leaves.
It is neither here nor there
That sigh of memory.

It is the trembling space
Never quite empty
In which the detail left
Grows always greater,

A single word, said
In the dark,
The planet hanging
From the celestial tree,

Or the bridge and the trickle
Of green and eastern water
Murmuring syllables
Of a desiccated language.

The water brims, the light
Emerges,
In a kind of singing lament;
In a transport of echoes and joys.

Stranded here,
My feet sink in the sand of islands,
In the soft mud between
Visions, recalls, shores.

Did I set you free? That's blessed.
The mind enslaved to the eye
Is never free,
And ever free.

The past is always arriving
In the present,
Exactly like the future,
Now more so.

The quiet that arrives, a freedom,
Descending in shadows of misted air,
Making you as I wish,
As I wished, as I half-remember.

Yourself, not me, but freest there,
Inside my stillness,
Delicate images wrinkling
The mind's awareness,

Sinking deep, then rising
Over the silhouettes of the trees,
There the dead day goes on
Reverberating, free

To assume a new space in us,
An unshared fragment of meaning,
That is mute, behind cloud, behind air
The mind would push through.

Contrapposto, Chiaroscuro

Here is the shining pool of darkness,
Beyond the face.
Here are the silhouettes of fir-trees
On a mountainous horizon.

The grey, white, blue peaks fade
Through endless air,
And reality descends.
We are also matter.

Here I speak to a friend
Over distance,
To whom one can say
Things silent here.

Words of the vulnerabilities,
Of the fears and failures,
Words of the inner night,
In a frame of twilight.

Here are the grasses, vital,
Springing, furious leaves,
Tendrils, buds and stems,
Flowers writhe under the hand.

Here are the shining pebbles
Of truth, of terrible truth.
Here are the gestures,
Tender as the eye of light.

Here is the distance from humanity.
Here is the human closeness,
The neighbourhood of lids,
Hands, stones, and trees.

Here is the line, delicate, the shading,
That crosses the contours
With the movement of nature,
The fractal deep.

Here is a life in the mind
Shining through flesh,
And the mind alive
Speaking mysteries.

Not the mysteries of ignorance,
Or superstition,
But the mysteries
Of knowledge,

And what will be known;
The science of being,
In which the object,
The force is always beyond us,

In the space of reality,
In the moment of light and shadow,
The twisting movement,
The flicker of the left hand,

Travelling over the surface,
Until mind is still.
The end of all vision
Is contemplation.

I speak to you, friend.
I contemplate your
Indissoluble meaning,
The tremor of the Other.

Afterglow

Beautifully in the darkness
The universe accelerates:
Dark energy, I sing of you.

Purposeless vanishing,
Intentionless motion,
World without our consent.

Without recognition
Of our presence,
The greater shining.

Sweetly in the night
The galaxies go dancing,
In veils of gaseous fire.

Whether the absence grows
Or contracts to the pinpoint
Prick of planet.

Whether the heart is one
Or many.
Wherever, whoever we may

Become, and have become,
Heirs to the past lives,
Or their afterglow,

Beautifully in the night
The universe flies apart.
Dark energy, I sing of you.

Dragon Bamboo

My head woven of fire,
Goes circling round the moon,
Shivering in the stream;
A recluse in cold pines.

All the words of the wind,
Grieve for the lost friend,
Fingers of light and snow,
The clear arc of the eye.

The bird soars among clouds.
The hollow stone is light,
Travelling through the depths,
A rippling emptiness.

This green creek all bright,
The fragrance of pale time.
Where now our illusions,
Where's the unbroken tie?

Inexhaustible night.
This high cold ridge.
Rock and wild bamboo.
These drifts of flame.

South Mountain

Moon on the rock-edge.
All of the mountain
Borrowed whiteness,
Forms of wild flowers.

Gazing at Being exactly:
The black pine-in-itself,
The dry heather blooms
And veils of leaves,

Precise, the externals.
No way not to be:
Incomprehensible
To be so, to be them.

Face to face
With the World,
In silence, solitude,
Here's the free spirit,

The ephemeral 'I am',
In the infinite 'It is'.
No deeper mystery
Or terror.

Autumn Moon clear
Born from dark rock,
What is all this world
We keep naming?

Freedom and Meaning

The lack of purpose frees us,
Free to create the purpose.

Free of the fixed self,
Free of the generations.

Free to make decisions,
Freed for the moral choices,

Constrained by genetics,
Unconstrained by the idea.

Free for non-violence,
Of mind or of body.

Free from oppression, vice,
Warfare, self-abuse,

Possessiveness, deceit,
Destruction, self-deception,

Free to delight in knowledge,
Science, affection, empathy.

Freed from illusion, maya,
Free of all the phantoms.

Free of the craving, grasping;
Power; all materiality.

Freedom from greed, corruption,
Grandiosity and status,

All the creatures freed with us,
Free from our persecution,

In the fraternity of sharing,
Free of planetary exploitation,

Free of action, interference,
Free of wrong technologies.

The free Individual,
Free to develop self; to be self,

Freedom from false systems,
Faiths, religions, superstitions,

Free not to follow, or to own,
And free not to believe.

Free of the institutions,
Causes, movements, nations,

Free of false-limitations,
Pre-conception, prejudice.

Free of history, the ghosts,
The pasts, the haunting.

Free of all afterlives,
Careful, transient, caring.

Free from the valueless:
Poison, waste, vice, ennui.

Freedom to think, to dream,
To imagine. Liberty!

Freedom from threat and fear,
Neglect, want, poverty.

Freedom from needless pain,
And a painless end to mortality.

Freedom of conscience. Life
That sets the other free.

Freedom from intrusion,
Possession; total privacy.

Freedom as equals to create,
Free spontaneity.

Free of time, eternal Moment.
Free of biology, through culture,

Free of the species, single selves,
Freed from the universe through mind.

Free of loss, stasis and constraint.
Free from every tribe and sect and creed.

The Individual forever above society.
Meaning and the inner conscience freed.

Scrambling Over Rocks Is Fine

Long winds through silent canyons.
Emptying the heart,
Emptying the heart.

Everything Moon always in flight.
The mirrors of tarns,
The mirror of stars.

Downstream, downstream
These thoughts of you,
Whirling, plunging, in confusion.

Scrambling over rocks is fine
To sit at last on wordless shelf,
Birds, clouds, mind up and gone.

Identity

Watching the foam, phosphorescent flicker
These coils of water wound in the stream,
Their obstinate centring round a hidden pole,
Their identity moving, returning, moving.

Crests of foam, wrinkled troughs, fire
Of stars scattering over the surface,
The riders of ripples glint from summits,
The spun glass, the whirling hair

Of pale rose networks grass-green gleams,
Matter in motion like slate, steel, pure tin,
The glitter and flare of the mind's excitement
Entering deeper in the world.

Watching the water slide under the breeze:
The opposite of mind's petrification,
Here is individual existence,
Not only ours,

All forms, beings; between matter
And self no true distinction,
Here the tremor of leaf on the twig,
Here the pebble afloat in the pool,

Here the mind deep in memory,
In thought, in imagination,
In the pain and delight,
The transient meaning of being.

Watching the moon, the cloud
In the blue and the grey,
The crescent sliding with stars,
The past slipping through dream,

The longing still, and the love,
A movement of spirit,
Watching the delicate tremors,
The speeding tremors of light,

The nameless, the silent,
The grey-white patterns of forms
Which die and are ever the same
Varying selves on self's secret axis,

The twisting, untwisting
Tendrils alive at the centre of change.
The quick motions of being.
The permanence of what passes.

The flakes of frost stars over the lake,
The sparks that rise, flare and fly
Into the dark of the trees,
The shiver of mind in its snow.

Watching the foam's phosphorescent flicker
The snake-shapes writhe in the stream,
The endless tremor round a hidden orbit,
The identity moving, returning, moving.

The insight into the rule of that voiceless motion,
Whose invisible bound is the magnet
That draws its track,
As the memory does the feeling,

That glimpse of the spectrum of all
Those identities of nature,
Their selfsame inner vibrations,
Their cries without sound,

Their returns without knowing,
Their fixations and stagnations,
Like mind in the mesh of matter,
Coming again to be.

Other Day

Waking from sleep to find the Self still here –
It's how matter moves like mind
That terrifies us:

The tiny flap of leaf flickers to and fro,
In humming circles of the wind,
To roof's repeated creaking.

Waking from sleep to find the Earth still here,
And white light making shapes
Across the wall.

The round of returning motion,
Orbiting strange centre,
Like mind around the self, is ever there.

Waking, the sad Self surfaces,
The 'I' is reconstructed
From memories; from the dream of being.

Waking to find universe still there,
Is always there,
Eternally existent;

Until, that is, our future absence,
From the void:
That *is* true nothing.

Otherwise waking, here, to life,
The massive beauty of the Sun,
The nameless world.

Hearing The Singing

I hear the world sing without us,
In the many silent forms of nature.
I hear the winds over the savannah,
The breakers, and the hiss of stars;

See the nameless patterns change and swirl,
Quicksilver splits, or petrol over water,
Life's speed of wild unwinding matter,
Spreading over the silence, moving

In the nameless spaces, beyond time,
Where the inanimate lingers becomes
Animate, alters the content of universe,
Makes of process matter endless mind.

I hear the planet sing without us,
Forests and rivers, seas and sands,
Singing the one true song, in the veins
Of leaf, in the flakes of burning foam,

I hear the universe sing our absence: we
Sing our presence. Earth, without feeling,
Sang of spaces where we were absent,
The void where blue orbs fall upwards,

The spaces before and the spaces after:
Though mind once possible must repeat
Somewhere in the infinite eternal. What
Has been forever now a potential of 'It is.'

I hear the moon and stars sing without us,
Without our empathy, appreciation, our
Verification from which the values came,
Love, truth, beauty: our virtual legacy.

I hear the Earth sing without us,
In the nameless silent forms of nature.
I hear the pine-tree on the mountain sigh,
Bending towards the glow of Jupiter.

Self Is The Strange Attractor

Blue light of evening falls on the web of leaves.
Self is the strange attractor, mind the orbits
Around the continuing poles of being,
Again, again, and never the same track twice.

Blue light of evening, and the Earth and Sun
Have changed subtle alignment in new transit,
But exact enough for world to seem constant,
Blue evening light on dark leaves.

The sky wholly clear. The wing-beats almost,
Never, the same quite twice, heading west.
Memory there. Self is the strange attractor,
Vibrating heart, pebble in the whirlpool,

Carried together we part, are carried together,
Around the maelstrom's gleaming surface.
Deep in the indentations of the wake,
Where we once stopped to find each other.

Lives circle round the core of their being,
We are the self's interpreter, translator,
Vague fragile memory, and simple orbit,
Caught in the flow: yearning, surrendering.

Four-Stream-Mountain

Birds all gone in the silence.
One last cloud dissolved.
The mountain and I, lost
In eternity, are each other.

Look, mist gathers in dim ravines.
No wind to blow all feeling away.
I climb upward thinking of you,
Cross the midnight stream alone.

All sound of sadness in the wind.
Night wind blows lonely in the stars.
All of it mindless, intentionless,
Caul of beauty, black deep mystery.

Wandering, far-off, empty, mind
Gathers wool on a slope of pine.
Down there, Self hangs in the water,
Bright reflection, transient light.

Snow Is Free

While the mind was sleeping,
Its night-heart beating,
The snow blew, falling,
White rain over the fields.

While memory dreamt,
Its dark veil drifting,
The stems were bowing,
Earth was shouldering.

While passage was suspended,
Space ended,
The snow blew, falling
Silently.

We Are Never Truly Here

The trembling, illusory self,
Whose now is not the world's now,
Its place not body's place;
That re-creates itself each day in process,
Surprises with its voices not our voice,
From depths not our depths,
But the creatures';
Is all we have.

Its freedom is the freedom of the rose,
Not to be bound,
To burn on the arc of branch
Above the water,
As nothing else but rose,
And nowhere else but here, wherever here is,
A messenger of the silence,
As all things untarnished,

Un-soured by words, are mutest messengers.
Its meaning
Is the meaning of all these tremors
Around you:
Immanence!
Inherence, the indwelling
Potency of what shimmers
In us as being, transience,
In all of which we are not truly here.

Settled Ash

The sky that's grey, that's almost white
Is beautiful.

Not warming, cheerful; only beautiful.
The bird flies through it, does not sail,
Eager to get, it seems, to the other side,
Although where sky's concerned
There is no other side.

It is a textured cloth of subtle pearl and snow,
Gripping the heart
With what is beyond the heart, and then
Easing the heart with what is similar,
Not purposed on being, saying,
Loving, killing, dreaming anything,
To itself nothing, least of all a question.

I love the sky that's verging on pure light,
But colourless,
No fractured rainbow or cerulean blue;
The shade of winter water
Its ghost vapours, aged ice,
Like the regret for what's past changing,
The settled ash.

To The Bringer Of Stars

Bringer of stars from silent spaces,
Twilight of mind among the criers,
What will you call of what we are
To mark the coming transformation?

Bringer of stars, on ancient towers,
Hills of silence, winds of mourning,
What will you weep of what was done,
To warn the simple and the love-wild?

How will you bless this planet, crier,
How will you uphold meaning, freedom,
Truth in the words, sincere affection,
Urge to create, or tender being?

Bringer of stars from every grass-land,
Every mountain, every ocean,
Cry the long, bitter ancestry,
Our potency, decry betrayal.

Bringer of stars from twilit spaces,
Voice of the silence among criers,
Mute with the sound of all this being,
Tell me, what will you cry?

The Silence Of The Animals

Is not our silence.
Ours is a stop to speech,
A pause to words,
While words go on trembling in the mind,

And the eye closes on vision.
Theirs is a lack of the symbols
That define us;
Their symbols of the senses.

Which in no way denigrates
Their intellect;
Being is deeper
Than understanding,

Minds can manipulate
The structures
Made of being,
Beyond words,

Though they too have cries,
Sighs, utterance,
Or we have theirs,
The long inheritance.

All from the one sieve,
All the un-deleted,
Stable in transient
Ephemeral persistence.

Down the slow light
Goes the dolphin
Speechless, below
Green waves,

Mandelstam's creature,
To whom our language
Might seem
A logical consequence,

But our grasp on life
Strangely weak,
For the greatest
Of survivors.

That is, in the sense
Of most versatile,
Most ghostlike,
Mental in symbolic spaces,

And so most swiftly perished;
The years of thought,
Gone in an instant
Like a power-less machine.

So we inherit
Too the greatest sadness,
In perceiving
The deepest value.

Mind in its beauty,
Ah, gone down,
Through the far calling
Of the silent creatures.

But Oh Be Careful Where You Interfere

No I don't advocate quietism,
Or not exactly.

Participate where you can make
Better from worst.

But the true weight of being
Is only found in vision,

And the end of vision
Is contemplation.

In the end we learn
To consider Being,

And that, in itself
True contemplation,

Leads to what mind
And heart in mind call love.

The adoration of the silent,
Inexpressible presence

Of the curve, the tension,
Hopkins' inscape, inward, inner landscape,

The folds and curls,
The stress of being here,

Which is so much more
Than mere description,

The what science is,
And why art survives,

Expressing the always
Inexpressible in human terms.

Why when the mouth is closed,
And the eye gazes,

The spirit is freed
To roam in ancient spaces:

Those stars much as we saw them
Glittering on grass and desert,

Those rivers and tides, those hills
Of the most delicate blue,

Those eyes, those leaves,
That godless blessed flow of fire.

Closure

There's the power in us to erase every darkness.
Closure is in the last repetition
Through which the poison flows
And flows away.

So the marred and fruitless vanishes,
And a veil of cloud hides hills,
A shower of rain conceals the night,
What resurrects in the mind is light.

The conscious has power too over the unconscious,
We are not slaves forever to the silence
Of dream, tremor, strange anxiety.
Don't bury the dead, scatter their secret ashes,

Watch the memories blow across the day
And erase themselves in whiteness
Or in the water, or in the vibrant green
Where the briar bird sings.

Freedom is ours. Plough history, shatter
The old conventions, break the mould,
Pull down false idols, topple
Thrones and altars, raze the hoards.

There's the power in us to find liberty,
Escape the chains and ropes,
Kick down the door,
And reach the living world again,

Which echoes cool clear in the first dawn,
The stone and tree and pool and star of us,
Risen out of centuries of darkness,
Hanging silent in the eye of being.

Words To The Waiting Self

Go softly now where you exist.
Who needs your stridency or your surprise?
Hide your life, that is the deepest freedom,
Absent yourself from the expected places,
Since silence is the greater prize.

Live in the quiet and the moderate,
Though the mind wild with passion,
Still wanders furthest, unexpected spaces.
Conceal yourself from those things that imprison,
Forms and powers, states and superstitions.

Be, face to face with the universe,
As you once were when a child,
Dreaming through other centuries,
Discarding everything around you,
Invoking other minds in the grass.

Live in the places where the free exist,
Find another meaning of your soil,
A resonance that trembles in the stone.
Make your own deep self your country,
Undemanding of your allegiance.

Most of all live beyond violence,
Violence to the spirit or the flesh,
Which if there were sin would be the greatest,
Remains the deepest crime against the human,
Its punishment its own darkness within.

Create. Being summons us to create,
To make, outside the self, the self inside,
And all our other values are its echoes,
Truth, beauty, love, freedom and meaning,
Go deeply now, once more, create yourself.

Pure Pointless

Into the long silence of the healed horizon
On slow hills that quench the anxious heart,
Where reflected water lights the clouds.

Lured into memory by the calm, then beyond
Memory, with the tremor of the bird and then
Beside it, into the forgotten and the lost.

Under the intentionless sky, dreaming to be
Gone, vanishing with the banished races,
The exiled species free of human taint.

In a quality of sunlight, in the equality of grass,
Through the nothingness which is everything,
Down the pure pointless air, the random gusts.

Released in the self's twilight, then free of self,
Sharing the light, pain, meaning, in compassion,
In the empathy that is the deeper self.

Crossing the boundary of life and matter, the life
Of matter, the similarities, mirroring of process,
Until the weight of that distinction passes.

Beyond the being and the dead, purified by air,
By the whisper of air, in the wake of worlds,
Unattached, alive among the shifting planes.

No longer earthbound. Within the re-enactment
The enactment, of all we were and all before us,
This adolescent species, at the core of wandering.

Into the irreducible, irreplaceable, into the stillness,
Through the flicker of joy, now un-remembered,
Into the intensity of Is, the brilliance of Now.

Back to the first encounter, forward to the fire,
Carrying the self, and setting the self aside,
In the vast freedom that is our meaning.

A re-invention of the grail, a non-religious
Movement of the spirit towards the thing itself
The sheer embodiment, mind in its flesh,

Turned inside-out and layered on the stars,
Until the universe and the idea are one,
One flickering, one working-through

Of the innate potentials, in the mystery
That is existence, mysterious not with
Some other looming from beyond space,

Time, or self, but mysterious in Being,
By right of being, the mindless outside mind,
From which mind rises, like the bird,

A calling, quivering of passion, a high cry,
All that is real, concealed and unconcealed,
In the sublime exhilaration, the 'here-alive',

Nothing else will know, can know, exactly
Like this, through the no-mind, no-sense,
Wild pouring-out of engendering possibility

Into the undefined, the vague, the melting
Speck of fragile passage far in light,
The half-heard tremor of the beating wing.

The Mind Is Wild

In each blade of grass the wilderness, in each flower,
As the heart, the mind, the self in each emotion.

Depth is the spirit moving through its refuge,
The archetype of time, as it falls through water,

To end as the fossil in cretaceous limestone,
A weathered fragment of the green-floored dale.

In inwardness the wilderness, the banished one,
That is never under threat since always free,

Though its external spaces are eroded, though
The tyranny of our passing ends their silence.

In every stone, at the pebble's core, is the wild.
The diamond, meaning, coruscates and trembles.

Nothing can be destroyed that's made of nothing.
We can never deflect a nature without intention.

Our freedom is never limited, thought's infinite,
And the feeling endures, in its infinite spaces.

Though there's an ache in losing all that beauty,
The wilderness remains, the mind is wild.

Moon-Mind Music

In the chaos, always the threads of order.
A finger's touch and they are drawn,
Like veils of light through which the feeling glows.

The cloak of order hides the seeds of chaos,
From which the meaning always takes its life,
The mind is not imposed from peak to base.

Moon rises from the trembling in the water,
Within the moon a shivering appears,
Form is fractured, the fractured forms itself.

Its shape it leaves behind: the form in time,
As though the hands have moulded transient being,
Placed it as an echo in the heart.

And delicately now the music moves,
The silence is the form that it goes seeking,
The silence where it's perfect cry began.

Without Tongues

Language is the artifice?
Bolted on, as it were, to the human,
And now the deepest part.

We grow tired of speaking,
Writing, listening to words,
The silence is deeper,

The absence of language is silence,
The silence of painting,
The silence of music.

Birdsong's a silence,
Landscape's a silence,
Love, sex, beauty, gesture, touch are silences.

The language of painting is in vision,
The tongue of reality is movement,
Its vowels are colours, its word the line.

The phrases of music are its tremors.
I hold you as we listen in the silence,
You hold the silence that we are.

All past genius dies in our mute stillness.
Its silence is the gift that echoes,
Through our voiceless squares of spirit.

Though we are made of language,
Our power is in the silence,
The thousand movements without words.

Beyond The Touch Of Language

The un-meaning of the world is not in language,
That is its freedom.
A world without intent
Is without meaning,
Since meaning is a mode of thought,
Though thought is not only word.

In the beginning was the wordless.
The universe is self-created,
Or at least self-perpetuated,
Half of our life is free of language,
What we touch, and taste, and see and feel.

The space in which our language stills,
Is the space of silence where we breathe,
Whose meanings are feelings and perceptions,
Which we cannot name,
Mind's deep phenomena.
Beyond the touch of language.

Keep Thinking

The heart lives in time as well as space.
We time-travel, there is no need to fly
Over the seven continents, five oceans.
Walk back into the past instead, or wait
Peacefully for the future, here it comes.

Thought the encompasser. Returning
Takes us as far as the three thousand
Mile journey, or even further, deeper
Into the spaces of the lost, those hours,
Glimmering enigmas we call memories.

We are free to leave this time and place,
We time-travel there is no need to race
From one end of landscape to the other,
All the time in eternity, and the timeless
Movement of existence, reality's dream.

Inside the heart various Chinese boxes
Unfold, and there at the core, the tiny
Creatures we are gesticulate, then rise
To become the genie-monsters, weep
And laugh then touch ambiguous tears.

Keep thinking. It's the escapee's pass
To another million lives we'll realise
As much or little as our own. Subvert
The expectations, dream beyond them,
Greater than we know. Keep thinking.

The Work

No I'm not interested in becoming you,
The creator, you are only myself turned
Inside out, and exercising your fine talent.
The greatest talent is called genius. You
I prefer to vanish behind the creation, or
We'd be trying to live each others' lives
Though one is dead. I would have been
Uncomfortable in your skin, more so than
In my own. But the work: let us instead
Focus on the work. There you made form,
That I can study, read, identify with, use,
To enrich my own existence, banish space.

Biography is simply a lie, more of a lie than
Those we tell as creators carving out creation.
What we think we are touching is not a self
Different to our own, though the life may be,
But the common self, the human experience,
A ghost from the web of language, conjured,
A veil of words that mean other things to us
Than their meaning to all those lost referents.
It is a construct of ourselves we find raised
On the ruins of time. Do you think you know
Me? I cannot know myself. But there's the work,
Let us rather focus on the work, evade the myth.

It is not the aches and pains of Beethoven's life
I hear in his music. It's the world sighing, then
Compressing all the grief and pain, joy and light,
Turmoil and tranquility, that hurricane, the calm,
Into the work. It is not Mozart dying young, lost
Music that I hear, it is the unwinding in process,
That builds a shape in time, and then the silence,
It is the work. The inexorable undying bars unfold
In interpretation. Note, word, line of sight, forms
Breathe and move again. These are our ongoing,
These are the patterns we make round us in the air,
In our brief lives. This is the making you inherit.

Hollow Reverberations

And if the poets don't sing freedom and values,
Who will, if the poets don't call out, lacking
Consent from the powers, lacking that mass
Endorsement, dark remuneration, absent
The sponsorship of the movers of money,
And the sellers of faiths, still un-approving
Of the world, given unseen, the emptiness....

Hollow reverberations in space place to place,
The lonely world needing a voice, lone voice,
To confirm the Void, to reiterate the absolute
Eternal presence, value, worth of the individual
Weak, fragile, transient: stand up against system,
Machine, crowd, institution, weight of enshrined,
Enthroned, received, authoritarian, ever-unjustified

Undeserved: against solidity, on behalf of ghosts
Of the sensitive deep-lived past, and the gentlest
Phantoms of the future already staring strange
At voiceless screens of dead warring mysterious
Factions drained of meaning, and in their love,
Warmth, quiet care, ships of feeling, reborn trails
Sending us all waves of incomprehension, pity.

Oh America, China, Russia, what are you, what
Were they: stand up the individual, glow the person,
And, no more part, fail to believe, neither follow nor
Own to, in lonely tears in sad eternity in the weeping
Of cities broken landscapes seas and forest poisoned,
No compromise once more with honest truth, simple
Beauty, silent love, free heart and dance of meaning.

What use our cleverness? In a lightning flash vanished
Human history, course of the species, armies, thrones,
The last conversation, the first universe, language, time
Idea and concept gone with the mind, the long the never
Lived, the strident masks, the vicious mutes, the secrets
Hardly secret, the vast movements of feeling hidden
In faces, the night-lit planet the empty city-less skies.

Bent to the beauty of nature, listening again, seeing,
Considering works of the mind not the execution
In lurid space of the interventionist nightmare dreams
Of the powerful, learning to leave all this alone, alone,
Poets like horses neighing, like birds sprinkling sound,
Nor needing forgiveness for words, seeking right ones,
The re-born fragments of human abandoned on the way.

Beyond Belief

What the sutras say, the final freedom
Is the freedom from Mind; why
They claim no path, no suffering,
No wisdom, no self, and no attainment.

The vision is a vanishing not into some
Great construct of the lost divinities,
But into what is, and beyond the Idea,
The shifting of process, energy, the tao.

So that nirvana is all around you, in you,
What cannot be seen or touched, what
Cannot be walked away from, Being
The veil, the shroud, the flesh, the form.

Language is simply left behind with mind,
So there are no sutras. Darkness and light,
The infinite plethora of moving processes,
Which the sutras suggest are therefore one,

But different, nirvana and samsara are one.
You don't get much from teaching or being
Taught the Way, good posture, temperance,
A certain ability to deceive the mind-self.

Faiths are hocus-pocus. It's good, feel free
By liberating yourself from mind. Watch
The waving grass, restrict your idle vision,
But don't leave your mind by the way-side.

Keep carrying it. Otherwise, where meaning,
And values, where aesthetics, where love?
Truth is not enough. Old time temple beauty
Was not created by lax hands un-forming,

And the things of the world are not no-thing
In nirvana which is at best a dubious state
Of non-naming beyond the names of things,
And not freedom, sceptical beyond belief.

Too Much

Often stepping back from the deadly tangle
Of human emotions, from Beethoven.
Listening for the clearer, voiceless music.

As though art might free itself from us,
And vanish into Nature, be leaf or stone,
Process of water, or convoluted breeze.

Cherishing the anonymous, undocumented
Life, the maestro lacking the biography,
The nameless corner thick with weeds,

A luxuriant growth of nothing in particular,
Unidentified space, slope hidden in the map,
And devoid of the human, careless of us.

Often stepping back from the bright abstract,
Which is mind disguised as non-mind, art
Of the self pretending to lack all selfhood.

Seeking relief from the heart's insistence
On recognition in the dumb unrecognised.
Waiting for the creator to lose that self,

And somehow disappear, why the lesser
May sometimes exceed the greater, by
Being purer truer flow of light or sound.

Certain polyphonic voices can achieve it,
The illusion of selflessness, the form
Exceeding the content, certain landscapes,

Of the non-human, the World, that has
No meaning, purpose, object or intent,
No claim on us, no point, no ownership.

Often stepping back from the terrible
Reiteration of our human affairs, so as
To find the un-false, un-pained, un-strident.

Between The Words And The Experience

Pain in memory is often merely pain,
An association turned away from, hurt
Of pride or self or stinging of remorse.
Or implicated indissolubly with beauty,
Regret, the loss, the freed and freeing.

Thinking of you without seeing you,
The ache of memory is often beauty,
Those places echo, the atmosphere
Shines and glows in the deeper mind,
Trembles with the high planet, shining

Between the words and the experience.
Here there is sky over endless rock-fall,
A moon in a fir, ten million years or one,
Dry light. A small bird flickers, present
Between shadows: there is a life in nature.

Can't Catch This

You have to be losing it,
Before you value it, that's half-true,
That the passing world,
The never-to-be-returned to, never
Quite caught and lived,
Haunts with beauty missed.

You have to be contemplating
Ends and not beginnings, to begin
Again to appreciate what
Was neglected in the action,
Hoard the thoughts,
And study the intense reflections.

You have to be going
To appreciate staying, saying
Goodbye to savour welcome,
Turning back to look
To see what the mountain meant.

You have to be part of the moon
Emptying reflected light out
Over a desolate sky to feel
The quiet of the air among the pines,
To attend without attending.

A New Cosmology

When the planets were abolished we had to hang
New ones in the sky, globes of matter,
Orbiting energies, in a dance
No longer of false signature
But still a harmony, their re-assurance,
Beyond the evening breeze,
In the frame of night.

When the light is gone, the past disappears,
Yet the light keeps coming,
Flare of the first moment in the last,
Which will also be the first,
And though there is no script
There is always the tremor
Of the mind being.

Though the jingling of rhyme is finished,
The lines continue to reverberate,
There is music of a different kind
Persuades the sole intelligence
That palms are swaying on Hawaiian shores,
That cedars creak in rain-blown Washington,
That waves break azure bathing Florida.

Mind is the only ground of its own being.
Poetry is no fiction, still the cry
Of the whole imagined spirit
Echoing in the spaces of its dreaming.
We have to say the simple things again,
The poem is stronger than the wind that tears
The cry of utterance from the crier.

Affirming The River

Immersive, there is a river of Being.
It moves with imperceptible flow,
And black with perpetual function
But un-repeating, a form of forms
Which themselves appear with no
Repetition within its pure identity.

Nothing looms either side of the river.
Here a stream without shores, paradox,
Enfolds every dark landscape inwardly,
Forests of feeling, stones of existence.
The river defines all freedoms freely,
The parameters of play and the fulcra

On which lives turn. You are at liberty
Within the arcs of possible horizons,
Which must shine through you to show
Glistening and shivering where you end
And they begin. Your freedom is the glow
Of light in the deep calyx becoming rose.

Nor does the river flow on from A to B.
It moves in place, like a dancer spinning,
Or the pale hands flickering over the keys.
No power can move it backward, since all
Flow in whatever direction is pure change,
Marks time, and backwards looks the same.

A river that's all around we cannot grasp.
Its silent bed empty, but always present.
Impossible to escape, impossible to hold.
It's what in looking deep we will not see,
But what in ignoring we'll achieve again,
Loud in our silence and lost if we speak.

This river rolls through us, not despite us.
It's the splashing of the un-reflected moon,
The tremor of self abstracted in the glass,
Like quanta, lacking metaphor, but singing
The woven meaning in the self-sown shape
That hovers in the memory, fuels the senses.

In the dead of winter it runs black as tar,
In the folds of summer glitters. Is the calm
That pours in sleep over the drowsy fields,
Is, suddenly, the lightning transformation
Of all that we thought or were. Depths
Where we drown, coils of our dissolution.

The Gift

You set me free. You told me the past
Dies in the instant, old forms survive
Only if minds allow, never kow-tow
To the powers, to whatever powers
Exist, never succumb, never subscribe,
Create the future that's already in you.

You liberated my heart from ownership,
Taught me there are no superiors, we
Come here naked and vanish blindly,
Best as beautiful ash in the ash of stars,
Galactic dust; that death not personified
Is an absence not a state; that life is all.

You set me free, to be a tree among trees,
A stream among streams, let the world in
And babble nonsense, Dada, if we would,
Which is a mirror bright with non-meaning,
With the intentionless, purposeless universe,
A concatenation of processes sans values.

You helped me comprehend we make value.
That the worlds of feeling are democracies,
No one holds a monopoly there, all equal,
When the thunderstorm echoes, the lightning
Falls, and emotion drives the outer mind
From its hidden recesses inside the inner.

You gave me the mountain and the empty air,
The everglades, the live-oaks and the cedars,
Taught me the human was the greatest poem,
Kindness the deepest value, candour, beauty
Not formed at others' expense, expressing self
In enduring ways. You gave me infinite mind,

Which is our whole potential, form's possibility
Beyond the miniscule, the Individual freshness.
You said that the truest art is free, open to all,
Whatever fences and walls are built around it,
In itself always free, speaking spirit to spirit,
A delivery of perceptions that any can perceive,

Therefore beyond and a definer of civilisations,
Not their slave. That violence against the body
Or mind is the greatest poison. That the traveller
Stands at the junction of past and future, both
Of which are always now, in the eternal present
Which is the unstoppable process of the world.

That all being is a miracle and all un-miraculous.
That custom, precedent, authority are powerless
Against the depth in things which has no power.
That everything is equal in being. That liberty
Is the recognition of that fact; its establishment
Against every new tyranny of flesh or the spirit.

It speaks the language of the sole greater future,
The tongue of the wiser dead in the living mouth.

The Meaning Of Blue

A parakeet of purest blue
Squawks above a world of fire.
It is an emblem, azure-hued
Of coarse and colourful desire,

The feathered arc of self as flesh,
A case of cartilage and bone,
Over the forest's earth and stone,
Gripping the iridescent mesh

That imitates the burning sun
In tiny orbs of glittering green.
A crier of the tropic scene,
Hung above the earth it shuns,

Half-capable of gaudy flight,
An icon of the true absurd,
Jewel in matter's verdant night,
Flask of being turned to bird.

Free At Last

In our centuries Science at last won
And religion lost,
Its better values absorbed deep
In secular society,
Its worse ones gone to join
The madness and the rants
Of history
For which sad violence was done.
We reached the place
Where the view is clearer,
And love, and beauty
Still remain.

In our centuries the shapes of man
And woman
Began to merge with the world
Our substance shifted
The hardware more readily defined
Though complex, the software there
But harder
To establish, realised at last
In the movement that is Mind
Something Buddha maybe understood,
In opting for peace
Non-self, Mind stilled.

In our centuries those who could read
Occupied the library, saw
That those in power read no better
Often worse, that time
Like power is empty
Space a dream we live, love
What redeems us, to use a word
Among those we must recover
From religion
And bless with our new meaning,
As we go, living, through the galaxies
Free at last.

Actuality

Why speak at all if we can't speak the truth?
“Describe what is,” they say, “describe,
Make a brighter show of being
Confess your actuality.
Though speech is not the truth,
Though ‘what is’ changes in what we seem
To see of what we are.”

The silence beyond us resonates more deeply.
We have no actuality but ideas,
The brightest show of being
Is not communicable
By words. Speech is our only truth,
And every landscape changes in its light
Within ourselves.

The Music

At night the sceptical music plays,
The chant of night is full of light,
The sea-foam and the cloud-displays
Bring me your beaches, moonlit-bright.

The surf has drowned us, rising time
Breaks in the bays, the singing sea
From out the deep's impressive mime
Conjures its dark eternity.

Your voice is silent: be the cry
Though, that in thought imagines you,
Your healing shadow where the eye
Rests in the untrue made the true,

As the sea makes order, as silence hums
With a non-silence, as the wave,
Repeating the unrepeated, drums
On sand and rock, turns silver braid.

Declare the night is our night now,
Though we own nothing, that the blue
Moon-drenched spaces will allow
Our deep humanity its due.

Make us more than the selves we are,
Or are not, raise the notes, the tones
Out of the dark from star to star
From coiling shells and glowing stones,

Inside my mind, the waking dream,
That among palms imagines all
The movements of your heart, its theme
The waves that rise, the stars that fall.

Eye Of The Camera, Feet On The Ground

From the heights of the field
The slope runs down to a copse
Of ash trees,
This is the aesthetic perspective,
The grass is a deep green waving
In the wind, the grassy sea,
The sky is blue, white clouds
Move gracefully, the walls
Of limestone plunge and ride
Contours, the heart is high.

Crossing the field is other,
We wade through grass, we sweat
Towards shapes
Of trees, the real perspective,
Grass is the watery mass that tires
The body, wind and light beat
At the eyes, make tears of effort,
Clouds exude cold, then heat,
The walls converge to a gate
Where the mud lies deep.

The terrible ecstasy of living possesses
Mind and bodies drowned
In actuality, you
And I move to its ancient rhythms,
The dance is being, these are the fields
That feel no past that exist free
Of whoever has ventured through them,
What they have raised, absorbed.
They are Now and Future, shoals
Of green beauty, dunes of unearthly light.

The Place Un-Haunted

The place un-haunted, the mind
Unhampered by messages
Scrawled on stone
Or signs from the blue.

A landscape devoid of battles,
Artefacts, event-packed levels,
The rocks yielding no fossils,
Surface reverting to mosses.

A world of wind-blown hollows,
Where nothing remembers.
Far to the south a forgotten sun,
The calm in day's eye.

Nothing here waiting for Woman
To be born, for Man to vanish.
No cry of the leaves
Denoting meaning.

Moon-dune grass in the wind,
Slow slopes of silence,
A sense of how night will feel
And the silvered stars.

Billows of cloud on horizons
Free of associations,
Far-off hills without names,
Wildflowers without duties,

Breezes free of responsibility.
In a distance no one walks,
The weight of the earth
Hanging without effort.

Nothing immense, the tiny
Intricate, formed,
The fractal deeps ordered,
The chaos imaginary

As is the nothingness.
The bright wind dancing
Over the fields, the light
In the air following.

No hands touching
The gate of significance.
A flickering of birds,
With their sibilant calls.

An un-haunted space
In which to create
The shine of mirrors
The idea of mountains.

Advice About Nothing

Continue until the technique is subsumed
In the sense of flow, the right action arising.

Wait on the total constraint of the hidden form.
As in the art of free verse where nothing is free.

Allow the tools to work themselves, the shape
To sculpt itself, the notes to fill the clef silently.

Any sense of progress will always be a surprise.
Consider content, the path appears, mind follows.

Practise until the unconscious mind takes over
The role of the conscious self then anticipates.

The breeze is already into the trees, the wave
Has already washed the stones and gone by.

What is left behind is what you were not expecting
When you tried to hold the air and trap the water,

Until the act of opening the hands invokes the act
Of endlessly opening the hands to a falling light.

Then the dancer dances without dancing, fingers
Move un-moving, the maker is beyond the making.

Doing nothing, attend to the something in the nothing.
The something in the nothing is the shape of emptiness.

Repeat whatever it was occurred until it occurs again,
Consider the quivering presence of forms. Continue.

Unwritten

Being comfortable with emptiness is a gift
I wish I'd comprehended when I was young.
Then I needed everything to happen at once.
Now I wish nothing to happen one at a time.

The mythology of a life takes time to create,
And we not even aware of our construction.
It may seem that a life occurs to and around,
In which the movements are an act foreseen,

But in fact every moment is a play of freedom,
More or less. Looking back the role expands,
The billowing of the backcloth grows familiar,
The scene one we somehow expected to create.

It vanishes. Thank goodness it's lost to time.
At worst the things we made survive, not us,
As if you might think my mind remains in this,
When in fact the journey is already complete,

And the form stands in its own light, one more
Move of the species, attempt at creating Man
And Woman, our order out of the wider order,
Child's pool carved out of the wash of the sea.

It's your mind moves here. Language ascends
From the upturned face to the singing azure,
Chasing the images. The skies on fire glitter
With galaxies, distances, unwritten emptiness.

Listen To Yourself

Here is the inner voice choosing the self,
Creating the human. Fragmentary tongue
You debate the being of worlds, shatter
Glisten, rebuild, are moon in the water,
From which identity and memory rise,
Distorted discourse in a swirl of forms.

You are not a mirror in which I reflect,
But the river of I flowing over the weirs,
Curbed in the deep pools, weed-tangled,
Jetting, shooting the rapids of existence,
My calms, my coils and whorls of time,
My torrents and remains, my abysses.

Here is the bitter dialogue in the mind,
The argument begun in youth, never
Ended, until we spin from the first
Grasp the unforeseen consequences,
The voice that mutters and reproaches,
Shouts and cries in marvellous delight.

Here is the complex that makes the man,
And that strange attractor of personality,
The repeated, never repeating orbit flown
Within the bounds of Individual pattern,
Around the shifting flickering tremor of I,
Here is the voice, buried in un-dark deeps.

Harming Freely Cannot Set Us Free

Softly the deer shift over the slope
In the landscape of fear. The wolves
Are elsewhere but the dread of wolves
Moves round wolf like a field of force,
Driving the herd steadily onwards.

Watch a whole ecology shift towards
The predator's existence. The very soil,
The air is subtly changed, the hollows
Fill with deeper hollows, expectation
Moves differently, our world's adrift.

We see it in ourselves, why the violent
Must be separated forever from the web
Of fuller meaning, why the tyrannies
Of amorality and immorality must be
Countered with decency, why no cause
Is just that maims innocents, no freedom

Ever a true freedom that espouses hatred.
In the landscape of fear no more excuses
For the predators, and no space for their
Self-justifications, their erroneous creeds,
Blind faiths, claims, desires, possessions.
The fighters for freedom slaughter liberty,

That is a truth that demands true contrition.
Tyrants from above echo tyrants from below.
Humility is endless. A quarrel with ourselves
Alone will purge the violence of the species.
The landscape of fear is not the space of love,
The predators of fear are not to be celebrated.

Wind In Grass

The wind moves over the mountainside, so
The mind moves,
The mind moves so the wind moves
Over the mountainside,
In a not-quite-reciprocal dance of being.

The field of grass is in both our minds,
Therefore both minds are one mind
And two,
The grass being no-mind
No-mind in both minds.

The silence before the wind blew
Was not the silence after,
The present is never the past,
Only mind is made
From the persistence of the signal.

Why should I mind the brushing
Of grass over the skin,
Or the insect brushing
The grass with its feet?
Life shades into non-life.

And consciousness shades
Into awareness, awareness
Into perception,
Mind into what runs under mind
And through it.

The windhover undermines the silence,
Without crying
In the harbour of the wind.
Its cry the memory of its cry
Echoing.

The light in the grass
Is golden, the windhover
In the wind is golden,
The golden grass
Waves in the windhover's eye.

Between us the rippling grass
Is like the stream of instants,
Its green light meets
The insistent searching of the eye,
Its net connects us.

The mind of the heron
The mind of the windhover
Are other.
My mind your mind
And their minds are other.

The cloud is a shadow over the grass,
The wind is a shadow over the grass,
You and I
Move
Over the shadowy grass.

Windhover flails in the wind
On outstretched wings.
It moves against the wind
That moves against it,
The wind that blows in our faces.

The language of cloud is movement.
The language of grass is movement.
The tree is a word spoken,
The field-wall is a sentence,
You and I our myriad phrases.

The river keeps leaving its form behind.
The shadow keeps leaving its memory behind,
The no-mind of grass
And the no-mind of cloud
Are reflected bright in the river.

All morning the wind moved in the grass,
And by evening
The mind moved there too,
Under the windhover's shadow,
Like the field-mouse among stems.

We were the stillness
The grass was the movement.
Then mind was the movement,
The grass was the stillness
Turn and turn about.

The meaning of grass
Is the movement of air,
As the meaning of mind
Is the trembling of thought,
Grass flowing through the eye.

The grass is not heavy,
The wind is heavy.
The mind is not heavy
The life is heavy,
Thought being life.

No surprise that the light
And the grass and the wind are one,
No surprise that the light
And the grass and the wind
And the mind are one.

Do you see how the wind
Brings the gold of the grass
To your feet?
Do you see how the wind
Keeps bathing your feet with gold?

The windhover goes circling
Through my mind.
My mind goes circling
In the windhover's eye,
Circling and circling.

You are the mind
But don't see the mind,
Like the eye
Of the bird
Filled with grass.

What I know is no more
Than is known
By the windhover's eye
Watching the grass move
Over the mountainside.

In the night
Beyond the mind
Is the grass still moving?
In the darkness
Is the wind still blowing?

The wind moves in the darkness
So the mind moves.
The mind moves so the wind
Moves in the darkness
Grass on the mountains of night.

Scared Off

The meaning escapes,
The creature goes clattering
Over the pots in the dark.

Climbing the sill
It left a trail,
Dark stains on the wood.

A puff of cloud
Over a silver moon,
Illuminates its flight.

It heads for the trees,
Whose leaves of metal,
Rattle in midnight breeze.

Back to its den in the wild,
Scampering,
Un-pursued.

It would be hard
To attribute human
Emotions to the non-human.

But we do; imagining
Its nervous fear,
Its tremors of anxiety,

Its heart-pounding flight,
Its final terrified plunge
Into an unknown lair.

Don't seek it there.
Some things must be left
To the free and the sacred.

Breathe the night of its absence
Filled with a bright
Muteness of moon.

Breathe the un-meaning
That fills the eye,
The far resolution.

A Fall Of Images

Here's the reality,
Full of shadows,
Free of images.

Gluck, out of Ovid,
Sounds in the dark
His Orphic delight.

The images are gone,
The music lingers
Melody its own faith.

We should be happy.
Infinite freedom
Sings in the night.

Sings us, the human.
Mighty forms
Were only phantoms,
Conjured by mind.

The too-high walls fell,
The too-deep sensibility
Turns outward again,
To a different future.

Don't believe, don't follow.
The depth is in us
And not in the forms,
Escaping the images.

Here's the reality,
Where all things stir
Out of the harmony
Pure in the darkness.

Once More

Over the field, go
The child of light
And the singing man
Over the dark field they go.

Down the furrow
Of upturned soil
Towards the distant line of trees
Beyond the abandoned plough.

Arms lifted to the sighing breeze,
Surrounded by birds
That wheel and cry
The child and the singing man

Go vanishing in the evening air,
Though their same selves return again
From the edge of the field
They emerge to view

And down the furrow again they go
The child of light
And the singing man
Through green and quivering air.

The Sole Singer

Not to be one voice but the many voices
That seems hard. Something
Would always be one alone, the sole singer.

Yet the meaning of the voice is in many
Tongues. Enough to be
Always caught in the enchantment of words.

The form will choose itself only because
The forms of others are part
Of the form of self, the hawthorn boughs

Enclose the enraptured man. And she who
Reads from the open book
Is always an emanation of their spirits.

White the hawthorn flowers, dark the branches,
Deep the spell, redolent the magic,
Yet he would always be one alone, the sole singer.

Lament For The Makers

Everything human destroys the wild, which is
Nothing human.

The forms of man hang over the diminished landscape
But the grass is singing.

Descend to the small, the individual, the patch
Of untarnished ground.

Live in the slighter circle of the eye, the inner orbit
Where life-forms gather.

Refute the image that denies the wilderness, abolish
That dominion.

The green glass fields, the metal leaves, the rivers
Of dark tar flow formally,

Inside a mind that would absorb the outer universe
Entire and rule

The silence it creates. Nature is not a given it is the space
Of our humility.

Everything human destroys the wild, which is
Nothing human.

Breathe Life

The words lie dead on the page until the life
Breathes through them, the sympathetic life.
The poem is an artefact devoid of meaning
Without the mind extracts and projects idea.

So this 'Being' which is Eternity in the moment,
Infinity in a speck is empty of meaning unless
Mind invests it with the same, the setting free
Of weightless Nature in the body of the world.

Moon The Mirror

Starlight's a dancer dancing late,
Moon is a green sliver of glass,
Over the mirror the clouds go past,
Within the mirror the abyss waits.

There is a vigour of light, the eye
Sooner or later fills with stars,
The moons of eternity flash by,
The abyss of meaning coruscates.

Your mouth opens against the wind
That tosses black branches of trees.
Go watch the grass run over the field
The oak tree bathed with sublimities,

A light so cold it chills the mind,
The delicate light of absent thought,
Branches in which the star is caught,
The moon a searchlight for the blind.

Down the deep dells of paradise
The wild thyme sends a fragrance pure
As the freedom of night air at your door,
That freedom the heart can't realise.

The mind moves from state to state
The sea of time and space roars by,
Self is a dancer dancing late,
Moon the mirror beyond the sky.

Leaves And Tendrils

Life does not move in space it moves in time.
Free of gravity, not contained by matter.
Life is the energy of the process running,
River a form the water leaves behind.

Life lives in mind not corporeal space,
The weightless figures soar over the grass,
Or climb the landscape on a Chinese silk,
The line of hills is where the hills take life.

Life is the spirit, mind in imagination.
Every creature's vision remains its own.
Mine is the green tree quivering of nature,
In that sense only spirit inhabits time

And space, becomes its own embodiment,
Though process of the body alone is mind,
Outer event and circumstance projections
As much as determinants of mental being.

The state of innocence is unclouded light,
Unhindered being free of past or future.
The child flies over the mountain-top in mind,
Mind flying over the mountain becomes a child.

Nothing of the dark human hinders life.
Ignorance, superstition, and oppression,
Cannot obliterate the fragrant sacredness
Of the eternal infinite heart of the flower,

That tiny in its essence is all existence,
That in its central sweetness holds the hour
The universe, the holy space and moment
(The words reclaimed again from religion).

The energy of the mind and the imagination
Are the tears of joy that well from landscape,
From the minute articulation of the creatures,
From everything given, not us and not made.

Life does not move in space, it moves in time,
As imagination moves through natural forms,
In living energy, all those leaves and tendrils,
Man in nature, nature alive in consciousness.

Walking Downstream

Tremor of the living bell of light in everything,
Glimmer of leaves on the long slow slopes.

Waking early, feeling cold, walking downstream,
Throwing stones into the quick translucent flow,

Thinking about process, all the process way back
To the first creatures near us, size of a mouse, maybe.

How the affectionate heart got here, the equable mind,
The stir of compassion, empathy, the warmth inside.

Feeling the flow of country, pleasure of landscape,
Which is itself in itself and no intent no one watching.

Feeling its solid salient otherness and its complete
Familiarity, being human, both intimate and exile.

Everything alive, even inanimate things, wondering
About the non-boundary between life and non-life.

Bathing eyes and mouth and wrists in the cool air,
Looking at pools of light, considering black hollows.

Hearing not one wild voice, but various sounds,
Each one free, individual, its own tongue and cry.

Envisaging how the whole curious world unplanned
From any 'above' amalgamating from below, seethes.

Wandering back of the trees, amongst loose bark
And stone, kicking at dust, eyes lost in the green.

Delighting in deep chance, in fractal randomness,
In the order in chaos which is simply delicate order.

Free of nothingness, knowing there was never nothing;
That nothing's a concept never was an aspect of the real.

Devoid of definition, like a child, devoid of owning
Like a grass-stalk, lacking authority, free from power.

Crossing the water, vanishing into the trees, finding
The place which is outside place, time beyond time,

Understood as the infinite and eternal living moment
About which we can only say: it's there, it is the 'it is'.

Cold brilliant shades of rushing current, wild flowers,
Breezes that blow idly through all the glimmering self.

Non-Intervention

There's a hole of soft pale rot in the cherry-tree.
Considering all the advice, it seems the best
Is to leave alone its fragile blossoming, odd
Leaf-fall, heart-eaten core, and ruined surfaces,

Not to touch its idiosyncratic shedding of curls
From lower branches, though green at the crown,
Accept the detritus. In winter still the deep pink
Flowers intensify the light in spring are shed fire.

Leave life alone. Be grateful. Here is something
That asks for nothing, gives everything: delight.

Free Will Song

It's the delicate complex,
How free will arises,
The tremor of subtle thought
That makes the self.

It's the delicate interplay
Of self and not-self
How free will arises,
Through us, not despite.

Though every process
Were determinate
No mind
Could grasp the complexity.

It would need a mind
To hold all that is,
Yet that mind itself
Could not be included.

Neither free nor bounded
That's the truth.
We are neither bounded
Nor free.

Self is the interplay
Self the complexity
What emerges from the net
To change itself.

Verlaine

That lightness, Verlaine,
That lightness again
We cannot achieve
Not the breeze on the leaf,

Nor the fall of the rain,
Not the drift of the heart,
That delicate art,
The beauty, the pain.

We cannot achieve
The lightness, Verlaine.

Burning

The heart's on fire that's our reality,
Despite the knowledge, the heart is still on fire,
Breathing its great desire to the universe,
Singing and rocking in its longing,
The heart that can't be still
That goes on beating
Though the void's the void
The far intentionless

The heart's on fire.

Bushes Of Green

The bushes of green are still,
Their forms bright in the sun
Thought is still,
Nothing moves over the eye.

Then the butterfly flies
Through a corner of vision
Its white banner of light
Wave of the tremor of life.

The mind falls away,
A flake of existence flickers
A process of thought
As well as a process of flight.

The butterfly flies through the mind,
The mind flies through the world,
Neither one of them still,
Behind are the bushes of green.

Un-tranquil

Is the great control the poetry,
The writer and the artist truly
A professional of the deep
Like a fisherman or a farmer?

Or does mind demand the other,
The vibration of truth, a stake
In being or non-being, tremor
Of the void within the void,

The self inside the Chinese mirror,
Signalling wildly, not so secure
That depth's an occupation, no
Sojourning in the dark country?

Recollection in tranquility is fine,
But the disturbance in the pool
Is not the fly-cast of the fisherman,
The soil is not the line of the plough.

In the end there is nothing to till,
And what you fish for shivers
And leaps in the hand in agony,
Reproaching the hook, the steel.

No complacency achieves the fire
That flickers from the darkness,
This universe is not of our making
Nor is it of any mind's making,

And what you feel, still, in your hand
Is the excrementitious husk the dumb
Leavings of the spectre and the shadow,
While beyond you the great world burns.

Heart-string

The mind does not describe, it invents.
Imagination is a plunge of language
That creates not truth but its mental
Echo, the resonances of the word.

Nothing exists for us except in vision.
The world we see is not the world
That is, and yet by that very act it is
The world that is, world we create.

We are doomed never to separate
World and mind. They exist wholly
Contained in each other, a Klein
Bottle with no inside, outside, both.

No use in setting out to describe
Existence. We exist in rhythm,
Thought, dynamic, feeling, being
Never in the arc of what's described,

A tremor in the texture of the real,
A humming of light around a star.
Hear the high note trill in the wind,
Vibrate in the nerves, the heart-strings.

No System

On silent hills we see it.
Human things fail,
The fantastic efforts,
Yet Nature does not fail.

Though four thousand years
Of the dream are over,
There is another dream
On silent hills.

The traveller's sigh
In the long grass
Is not the grasses' sighing,
Nor the breeze.

High above the earth
A lone bird turns
Against pale cloud
Slowly gyring.

No ordinance from time,
We're free to go,
No system
Lasts.

Portrait

Rituals of others
Never interested me.
I preferred my own
Repetitions.

The universe I loved,
Beyond the human,
At the edge of space
And time,

In anything unmade
In nature given,
A leaf, an insect,
A galaxy, a flower.

I liked the science
Mind knowing,
But failed at detail,
Forgot the names,

Found the what
Resonant not the how,
Existence itself
And not its mirror.

Delighted in the arts
Though unconvinced
Of the value
Of climbing the mountain.

Practised for myself,
Free of the world
Careless of audience,
Always played,

Ruled myself,
Never served.
Understood
Nothing survives

Indefinitely,
And short term
Barely matters.
Time is long.

Was most at peace
Harming nothing,
Leaving all
The creatures alone.

Knew in the end
That nothing human
Has any power
Or authority.

Made my own laws
And moral harmony
Out of love truth
And beauty.

Hid my life
Within the fold,
Never joined
Or followed.

Was one alone.
Sang because
Nothing else
Was worth a candle,

So made poems,
Slight as shadows,
Stronger than
Flesh and steel.

Walked all the ways,
Held landscape
Inside myself
Sacred treasured,

The silent places
And the shining,
The small eternal,
Infinite.

Loved the few,
Indifferent to the rest
Why pretend?
Tenacious of my own.

Wholly bored by sin,
By activity with no
Deep creation,
By command.

Loved wordplay, satire,
All that ridicules
Meaningless status
And hierarchy.

Laughed deeply
Beyond the verse,
With delicate laughter
That ignites the sky.

Bathed my head
In the mountain stream.
Washed my feet
In the endless river.

Vanished alone
Among trees,
Inhabit still
Your darkness.

The Dialogue

We make ourselves from the dialogue with true minds.
The form, the poem, the output matters less than the act
Of perception and debate, with those words that matter
Not even the person. There is a hankering after artefacts,
The detritus the act leaves behind, but all that coruscates
Exists in the human mind, that hidden individual flicker
Of light across the Moment. We seek agreement, comfort
In some essential way, impressed by content or technique
But in the end loving the most what merges with the self,
In that sense only there's a hierarchy but only for the self.
To love all equally is untrue, though you can love the life
In all things equally, energy that modulates through form.
Which is why when words fail us, as they do, and human
Entities seem cold, chilled by the poems of winter, a focus
On the water not the river, the grass and not the mountains
Vivifies. Nothing is major, minor, every real existent holds
An equal value, Being. The democracy of feeling resonates,
The democracy of 'here', whenever here is, floating freely
In this sea of meaning, in this universe devoid of a centre,
Uncreated, purposeless and unmade. We make ourselves
From the testing of each phrase in a single passing-through,
That is the life of life, Kierkegaard's truth, 'the truth for me'.

The Western Way

The world outside is already inside us.
The world inside is already outside,
Not 'in-itself' since, possessing no self,
Its non-mind is not a function of mind.

Unperceived the world exists as 'no thing',
A deeper 'no thing' than emptiness or absence,
Mind considers it existing beyond perception,
Our equations capture its being in perception.

It's a confusion of mind to imagine that mind
By any inner process can transcend the world.
Nirvana and samsara are always one, to see that
Is an act of perception, every way is the way.

In the tension between world and mind, the self
Exists. Personal perception vanishes with the self.
But the world which is 'no thing' the perceptions
Of others continue, we believe, in the unperceived.

The way of wisdom is the way of acceptance, sadly
The heart cannot accept. The way of wisdom is the way
Of humility, to dance with the dance of wave or leaf,
Sadly the mind would comprehend the 'no thing',

Unsatisfied, though acceptance and humility are best.

The Un-Sub-Conscious

In the dream a stranger
Stole something
Precious from me.
I kept glimpsing it again.

I left my luggage on the train,
The city was strange,
Baroque buildings,
Giant roadways, I was lost.

In the dream you were there
In another's body,
The deep sense of you
A different face.

Serpents writhed in a pool,
Disgust. I stood with
----- on a beach.
Wooden trucks ran on rails.

In the dream I almost touched you,
You slipped away,
No taxis stopped,
Existence stalled.

Waking frustrated in the dawn,
We laugh at dreams,
The random noise
Where Freud dreamed meaning.

Illusions Of Winter

Our darkness in the sun
Becomes transparent.
See, the darkness was
Not of us but on us.

In the light, we illuminate.
The eye of air opens
The breeze shines
World glimmers.

The ice of winter
Was also summer.
The burning tree
Shows coolest green.

We are all elements
And none, the moon
Is like a silver sun,
Sun molten moon.

We thought we were
Bound by frozen night,
Yet we are joy,
Eternity's delight.

Making Eternity

Don't spend too much time
In the world of the phantoms.
Gazing at spectres
We turn spectral.

*In Eternity light flows
Through the buildings
Reality touches us
Pain brings tears.*

The ghostly Selves hover
Over mindless streets
Enslaved we enslave
Ourselves, darkly.

*In the timeless Moment
Tenderness dispels
Illusion, the child
Is right, the laughter.*

Glass, metal, tar
The phantoms travel.
We near the machine
Its immortal mind.

*In the calyx, in the grass
Eons go by,
Minds sing
The diamond of humility.*

The spectre raves
Fear violence war
Sin law possession,
Burning disconnection.

*The ancient human dances,
The dust glistens,
Every pebble
Is a congealed star.*

Their lost transactions
Their ghostly cries,
Their ghastly darkneses
Enwrap the phantoms.

*When with a kiss the eye
Lights the dawn,
On silent streets
Mountains tremble.*

Oh, don't hold hands
With the phantoms,
Denying the spectres,
Spurn the spectral world.

Ab-surd

The note's discordant
Inharmonious,
The self's incongruous
Exiled from the creature.

Yet the absurd is also part
(Its core a feeling,
Therefore a judgment
On the world)

Of all that is world,
Wild, meaningless,
Free of intent,
A singing in the void,

A music out of deafness,
Out of silence
Over which the tightrope-walker
Stumbles

(Metaphor by Nietzsche,
Design by Klee).
The birds twitter
In the wind on the wires,

Like notes (Pound)
On the clef.
Random form's
Sweet non-randomness,

How all from chance
Looks nothing chanced,
Rather a complex
Articulation.

Strange skeleton
That sways,
Mad tongue
That speaks.

Its foolish
Babble,
'Dada',
Purest.

Calling

Poetry goes trembling through the world,
Calling the human from the myriad roles,
Invoking the ground we have forgotten.

Its bell-note's on the threshold of hearing,
Shimmering beneath the sounds it makes,
Like feeling beneath the gestures of mind.

The oak tree leaves reflect the quiet moon.
You cross my sleepless thoughts at dawn,
Speaking the secret, life lives and is eternal,

In moments outside time and wholly being.
All minds are different but there are states
That minds of difference may reach together,

That's when the dark trees glitter, trembles
In silver the resonance free of gods, and yet
Where, as in Dante's paradise, the minds

Speak one language, without ever speaking,
Merge in the community of mental spirits,
Crossing eons, generations, invoking echoes,

Calling the human out from the myriad roles,
Summoning up the earth we have forgotten
Poetry beating out through the twilit world.

Why Morality Is A Process

Right intentions may often end in tragic consequences,
Destructiveness may sadly result in apparent benefit.

Right and wrong are not things or states, but processes.
Forever distinguish intentions, actions, and outcomes,

Each of which we may judge right or wrong: or a mixture
For example killing the violent still perpetuates violence,

Rendering the intent impure, contaminating the outcome,
And the agents in the process are they then right or wrong?

To live by principles is to carry razor blades in your hands.
Our principles often conflict. Safety and freedom, loyalty

And truth, non-intervention and self-defence, the moral
Drama is the never-ending story of conflicts of principle.

Compromise is our tragedy, we, endlessly compromised
Navigate through the waves, deceived by flashing beacons.

But judgement must take sides, no morality is abstract,
Its intentions, actions, outcomes are realities in the world.

To declare that all moralities are equal, all things relative
Is true only from a perspective unengaged with morality,

But is itself a judgement made within morality, showing
The nature of the beast which is choice, inward decision.

We can only choose our principles, state our intentions,
For example choose creation, kindness, beauty, truth.

Which though they seem to possess a power beyond us,
Are only the objectifications of choices deep within us.

The rest is a matter of judgement, exercising the brain
Balancing right and wrong, living in tension with life,

Understanding why codes and creeds, laws and customs
Fail us, beyond good and evil, why morality is a process.

Picking Fruit

Far too much time making a living,
Far too little living and making
Circles in the air like the birds,
Wakes in the sea like the fish.

Far too much time learning, disputing,
Far too little looking, being
Quiet like the mice in the grass,
Still as the bug on the leaf.

All of us caught in the world
Yet not caught by it,
All of us following the way
But not on it.

Far too much energy lost
Parting the stalks at night,
Far too little picking
Fruit in the light.

Musing On Individuality

It's more important to be yourself than someone else.
You can fit in their head but that's the rictus smile,
Not theirs or yours, and their skin sits uncomfortably
On your flesh. I almost know what it's like to be me,
But no idea what it's like to be you. Empathy, yes,
But that's the creation of the mutual human, common
Twitch of the nerves, shared feelings, but as to your
Subtle thoughts I'm not privy to them or you to mine.

It's more important to let words flow than contain them.
You'll be a professional if you can simulate the feelings,
Or rather evoke them by sitting in the right posture, then
Conjuring the right mood, and replicating. That's a style,
You might be famous. But it's not truth, and we know it.
Better to be those amateurs of the spirit, Bronte or Blake,
We recognise the extremists, they mark the boundaries,
Rather them than us, yet rather them than the anodyne.

It's more important to keep re-starting than to finish.
It's too easy for the finished to become a background
Sound that fails to reach the brain, but still if we listen
There's the marvellous human in that chorus, here's
The lone voice and its reply entwining in the darkness.
Shakespeare said in a sonnet how his voice was always
The same. Shakespeare! Don't try to be me, promise,
And I'll promise to try not to be you, though it's hard.

The Essence Of Consciousness Is Feeling

Searching for the kindness in the world
But not its effusiveness,
The quiet warmth that acknowledges
Our presence,
Delicate as an eyelid, and lets go,
Free of ownership,
That's hard to find.

Why should the self be selfless?
Unless it understands
The darkness and the coldness of the spaces,
Our fear of violence
And of each other, our fear of self,
The layers underneath
That seethe and bubble.

Searching for the human in the inhuman
Eternally disappointed,
Wanting the echo that is more than echo,
The self itself responding,
Is unreasonable; we are not reason,
The essence of consciousness
Is feeling, what we suffer and project.

A Vision

Slipping into Eternity on the quiet
All night shining under the shining stars,
Sitting at the top of the mountain,
Embracing those heroic clouds.

Radiant forests, all the ages
Of man and woman open
To the love concealed
In the human spirit.

Strange beautiful visions,
The imprisoned freed,
The illumining galaxies,
All of us timeless friends.

A diamond in every pebble,
A gentleness moving the leaves,
A tenderness touching the flesh,
All existent beings equal.

Everything natural rising,
The unnatural falling,
Light in the invisible self,
Time banished from the world.

Our sadness over,
Seeing in ecstasy
Cessation of war,
An end to misery.

Space not a thing a process.
Life a jewel.
The emptiness all forms.
The forms pure emptiness.

The unintentional world
Purposelessly singing
Like the wind in the wires
On a hundred hillsides.

Rain quenching our fires.
Anonymity ascending.
Stars like tears of the night
Falling in slow motion.

Until we are sober with joy,
Free of all possession,
All power ended,
All violence done with.

Radiant forests, all the ages
Of man and woman open
To the love concealed
In the human spirit.

There's Nothing In The Room

When I reach the core of myself I grow quiet.
Lacking everything there needs nothing else.

Anonymous light moves over a green surface,
Like moonshine on bottle glass godlessly deep.

Strange that mind's rare complex of processes
Should run in such tiny hardware, cellular soft.

The house, empty of gods, glistens in rainfall.
Shining wet streets fill, nothing creaks the stair.

The ghosts all evaporated with reality's breath.
Shadows, forms on the wall, have no way to hang.

Nothing human as self stirs in the alien spaces,
Nothing out of the stars sings self for an answer.

At the core of myself I am content to be echo-less,
A rhythm among blue, green, red veils of energy.

It suffices to be silent, mute in the voiceless world,
In the darkest core of the self needing nothing at all,

Yet a delicate nothingness, in which in uncertainty
Small quantum effects might sketch a whole universe,

A resonant nothingness like darkness after the music,
Or lips before words unresolved what they might say.

Pair In Pallor

The night knew nothing and the light was swept
By leaves that sweep
The absence of themselves.

The stars were lit like gleaming holes in glass
Making the emptiness
The emptier.

The howling of the wind was the howling
Of its metaphor, its cry
The very ghost of us.

The greenness of the grass was virent green,
Greensilver
On the ladder of the night.

Its potency expressed the openings in us like
Cuts in fruit
Oozing the other eerily.

I dipped my hand in you and plucked the string
That in a-sexual night
Made modulation.

You dipped your hand in me to sound a chord,
The seed of understood integrity
Its feeling resonance.

The universe was no universe we needed, not our world,
A phenomenon often noted.
Your eye shone still.

We crossed beyond ourselves, beyond the borders
Of ourselves, on that fine boundary
That separates the merged and separated.

Stood there to face the emptiness of darkness
Two pale alight, against the far non-human,
In mind that lights a different kind of star.

Beyond Your Dark Miami

Beyond your dark Miami lies the night.
The Indians beneath the skyscrapers
No longer
Rattle their accoutrements in the breeze.

Sinks a confusion of bright beaches hot
Swamps violet indelicate flows among
The virescent
Seething of those trees that are not my trees.

Ocean voices seemingly seeking to articulate
Shapes of your word foaming in my mind
Dissenting
Break idly in the mouths of the nameless bays.

What is the meaning of the shapes of winter
Against the palms of night the far cascades
Those shining bays
Swelling in night beyond your dark Miami?

A Hand's Breadth Away

The younger selves are still there in the mind
So near they walk and talk
So near if it were not for time
If it were not
For the having been we feel
We could step back into that life
Only now knowing
What we know of its future
Be there again.

Not be nearer the end
But nearer the beginning
And without its pain
As if it were now
Never to make the same mistakes
Again the moments of shame
Rather now knowing
What it means to be future
Over again.

Irony

Poetry and post-modern irony
Don't fit well together.
Poetry is the starving child,
Our embarrassment
In the face of meaning and the real,
Our misuse of our freedom,
The lost chance
To hold a face in tenderness
Forgiven forgive,
The sentiment at the core
Of being, not the rationale:
Yet not the raw feeling either
But its verbal resonances,
Nature we're parted from,
Nature we carry on,
Tension between the two.

Between the naïve and the over-wrought
Where are we?
The raw and cooked of us
Won't feed the world.
Our freedom is not free
Until we take back the names
From power and religion,
How the world works
Is not how we work
How the mind works,
The individual exceeds
The moment of its being
Irony is just a social thing,
The deeper self
Is irony-free, its nakedness
The child's gaze from the dust.

Before The Rain

Leaf circles and ticks on a twig
In the breeze.

Soft pale moss
Extends
Over stones,
In textile tendrils
Tough, swollen, intricate,

A dumb grey mat.
Water quivers.

Volumes of cloud
Above the hanging eaves
Gather, un-gather.

What slides right down
Into the core
Of my being
Is a free flight
Of a single drop
Its whole fall.

Truth's There All The Time

Nameless trappers
Go slaughtering and singing
In the mountains
Their justification
Nature's teeth and claws,
Which of course
Are mostly
A matter of survival.

The Jains
Brush insects
From the path,
Uproot no plants,
In extreme non-violence
Follow the three jewels
Seek moksha,
Freedom from the cycles.

The godless sky-clad
Renouncing all possessions
Follow the meaningless way,
In the un-created,
Unwind the endless thread,
Not intervening.
The nearest the human
Gets to truth.

Ash

The ice is tougher
But the world is poorer
For the loss
Of the wintry sun.

The way to Xanadu
Is covered
With ice
And no one singing.

Here's a green chasm
Of trees
That falls to a shore
Of bone.

Your thoughts dance
In a circle,
You dance
In a circle.

The circling trees
Are billowing,
The waves of the sea
Are billowing, below.

The earth is turning
The path round
And round
In the sky.

Never you mind
What we have drunk.
It brings
Vision.

Vision
Compromised,
The unwished
Intruder,

Ash
Where the leper
Rang
His bell,

Where the crow
Sat by the stone
Denying
Other selves.

Its whirling eye,
Circling
The icy
Note sounding.

One Too Many

The problem is we are all too many people.
We say there's a core of self,
We commend a style,
But Buddha was right

There are the drifting skandhas
The aggregates of mind,
World to which we cling.
Pity his followers

Petrified it to a system.
Life's not susceptible to systemizing,
Its energies
Are contradictions.

While we, like the bees
Buzzing in the firethorn
With their own skandhas,
Prefer simplicities:

And perhaps they do
Dance to tell each other
Where the pollen is
Along the trail.

Out of all of it
Should come a self,
But looking deeper
Where's that thing?

Trying foolishly
To catch the process
Light faded
Moon broke in the water.

The Vague Words

Spend a day among the vague words
To understand why dictionaries won't tell you
The secrets of existence.

The meaning of a word is all it points towards,
All the fine gestures of its flailing arms,
A scarecrow in a wind-blown cloud of birds.

We comprehend vague words through other words,
Each word its synonyms, the metaphors
To which it contributes, which explicate it.

Meaning is not the knowing, the in-formed,
Meaning is a projection on the world
Of how the knowledge is and might be wielded,

That projection of meaning is consciousness,
Felt along the nerves and in the senses,
To grasp a world, to hold a world entire.

A vague word is a hinterland, the grasses
Wave there temptingly, we find ourselves
Crossing those green wastes of the un-wasted.

Best at night under a gleaming moon, vague
Words glimmer, make us shiver,
Showing us how we only thought we knew,

That in the end words cannot define the bright
Glitter of the real, though the poets
Love vague words, its pools in which they bathe.

Do The Maths

The strange efficacy of mathematics:
Largely about form and conservation,
The latter the permanence in change,
The former the structure that changes.

A mirror of form held up to the world
With all the equalities and inequalities
That reflect those conserved quantities
Distorts and yet illuminates the real,

Which being pure existence must escape
A language made of logic and measure,
But falls so lightly within its grasp. How
It is has proven strange as we might hope,

Since the demon, if we must conjure one
And have it walk the house, is boredom,
Baudelaire's ennui: our spur and goad
Still curiosity and the dream of meaning.

Hope for complexity, for infinite detail,
For the strange efficacy of mathematics
To bridge the silence for us and the void.
Hope never to exhaust the how within.

The Better Mask

The kind man who makes a kind world live
And lives within it, makes a kind poetry
In which my mind finds room to move,
That kind man of nature or the city who
Expresses facets of the self and describes
The essential life of his being, moving.

Though I breathe that air I am inarticulate
Beside them, those flowing bards of being,
Sitting cross-legged, or up and fixing truck,
Or shopping the supermarket full of ghosts
Or emerging from the pure cascade smiling;
I never was good enough at simply seeing.

I'm too far in the Tao, can't cling enough
To all the names of things, lovely surface,
The forms that dignify our flesh and bone,
Where the kind heart's outwardly realised
Where the peaceable and true finds content;
Too deeply submerged in the swirl and foam.

But the kind man, who makes a kind world live
And lives within, delights the heart and mind,
Empties it of self, though all phantom samsara,
All display, all the idle sanity of spinning light,
Though mask, disguise, hiding the inner silence,
Better than other masks where the spectres hide.

Big Heat

In the cool room, out of the burning sun,
A granite sun that settles on the world
The blue world of stone under the sun.

No ghost could tolerate the fall of light,
Those who cannot return who will not
Are not walking in the cauldron there,

Nor in the cool room; a human meaning
Rests on the pictures, dwells in the music
That cannot penetrate beyond the glass.

There is a sense of flowers but distilled.
Nevertheless the fire beyond the cedars
Fails to conjure the dead phantoms here.

Does the world exist? Feel its coolness,
Watch its fire consume the everglades,
Crushed beneath the granite of its sun.

Mind in a place beyond its outer season,
Rests on the pictures, dwells in the music,
Refuses the ghosts that fail to live again.

Gone Under

Asleep, no self and nothing there, no universe,
Only a strange movement of the self,
In a silence without colour but aware.

Some place else perhaps those random flows
Continue their roll beneath the deep ravine,
With all you are not gathered in their roiling,

Perhaps what is not consciousness though very
Like it, full of feelings and faiths, wild loyalties
And complex structures of imprisoned freedom,

Presents you still to yourself, though sleeping far
In the mute tinkling drowsiness of otherworld,
Brings you the sense of undiminished landscape,

Hills that are more than hills and less than green,
Clouds that are gasps of light and not its absence,
Clues to the meaning of all that exceeds meaning.

Morning News

Scavenging over rubble, the children from the latest war.
Several casualties climb from a bus on a broken highway.

The world is warming. Smoke from here makes smog there.
Choking ghost towns sink in smouldering ruins. Politicians'

Words make markets, markets unmake politicians, worlds
Totter on the brink of whatever would lie beyond the brink.

The moral high ground, a swamp, breeds unholy monsters.
Insight, cures, talent, beauty, and many criminals wanted.

Scavenging in the rubble all the children from the latest war
Of religion, of power. Men and women confused by gender,

And agenda. Weather. Creatures found to have intelligence,
Always had. Human trafficking, spiritual oppression, deaths.

Saviours of nature needed, sign up here. Teams with animal
Names, competition. Farming, schooling, science, and an art.

Vast wave of technology, several weapons discharged darkly.
Scavenging over the rubble, the children from the latest war.

Old House, Empty Pond

Wind winks in the darkness, and it's gone,
Spreading in the light the leaf-woven landscape
The forever new shining again;
A flash of lightning, the extensive ruin's done.

Things, which are never simple, being flow,
And never plain, declare their self-ness,
No aftershock lingers.
What's fallen falls out of its own decay.

This is world, reality; nothing is major, minor,
Everything is all keys, in one, together,
Sounding no diminution.
All efforts fail, the order always illusion.

But nature does not fail, Imagination.
The human genius, nature's, is forever
Renew, begin again,
The fresh integrity is always greater,

Than what is done with. Should we linger
In the silent wasteland neither of our creation
Nor our ending?
The Moment is all the future and beginning.

Warning The Waverers

Little far cries of owls in the night,
Clasping limbs of darkness,
Echo through glass
Shiver in the ear
Of sleep,
Evoke moonlight.

No sadness of existence,
Only its lovely cry,
Reality's moonlit face
No rain, no tears
Of light
No intelligence

Scrabbling at meaning, unless
The intelligence of owls,
Deep in the dark
Grasping lichened
Branches,
Warning the waverers.

Down the Empty Mountain

Smoothed-over rock pours down,
Light filters through cedars,
Birds vanish downstream
Pollen blows in our faces.

Consciousness is meaning
Extracted and projected.
Existence is a coiled spring
Ready to unwind without us.

Follow the trail to forget the trail,
Millennial dust makes new pines,
Fresh falls of being flowing
Down the empty mountain.

Feeling The Pain Of The World

Feeling the pain of the world does not preclude
Involvement, involvement does not preclude
Feeling the pain. Sensitised you can feel it
In the jar of a logging machine, the saw's
Whine, the click of a trap,
Freedom's cage,
The dark trail of a memory
Crossing behind the hedge,
In the dust and glare,
In the cool ditch,
In the night-bound creature's cry.

Singing the pain of the world is a mystery
Of irony; the human mislaid, fouled
In mindless action. Sensitised the black
Trees glisten, the cold moon shines
On all the clarities not understood,
And the nerves object
To the dumb density,
The pall of matter, the refusal,
To comprehend, to rectify,
To all the failures of mind.

Feeling the pain of the world does not preclude
Involvement, involvement does not preclude
Feeling the pain. Sensitised you can feel it
In the thud of a jack-hammer, in the jet's
Whine, the gate's clang,
Meaning's metal cage,
The dark trail of a memory
Crossing the silent roadway,
In the dust and glare,
In the dry cement,
In the midnight voiceless cry.

Modernity Roars

Giant columns of Maya glisten in evening air.
Above, the contrails shine
The jets of power.
Who gave consent?

Motionless phantoms shimmer in evening air,
The human spectres silent
Against this hour.
Who's innocent?

The Lost Pianist

The place exists but we are no longer there,
Or if we exist the place is no longer there,

The place in space is not the place in mind
Of shore where we arrived, there is no wild

Piano, or if there is it plays a different music,
Than that which plays beyond place and time,

Nor would we see the pianist trying to escape
Or his hands to escape over the shivering keys,

In a place which does not exist but is contained
In the motion of the place that must exist in time,

Or a moment non-existent but still contained
In the moment of its being that moves in mind

Like a flash of summer lightning. Which is more
Real, here or the being in place which forever is,

Where no waves ripple except beneath that moon,
Which is also here, other shining aspect of the real?

The double mask gleams, our eyes shine through,
The wildest notes cascade, the lost pianist plays.

Little Daedal Song

Construct me a language of the sun
Before the whirling earth was spun.

Sculpt me a language made of light
To out-metaphor the glittering night.

Shape me a language from the tongue
Of febrile seas when earth was young,

Then make me a language of the moon,
Night grasses whispering late and soon

Of all that we are, and of all we shall be,
When I speak to you, when you speak to me.

The Difference

Everything echoes, there are
Too many voices sounding.
You can't say a word without
Shaking the threads of others.

And worlds hang from the ends,
Minds hanging from the worlds,
The leaden leaves glisten with
All the skies they've reflected.

The core thousand words recur,
In any language. The same blue
Covers the leaves, or is it green?
Is that a breeze or the inner life?

I speak to you through the echoes,
Distracted by voices sounding.
Please say a word of your own,
Each voice makes the difference.

The Un-possessed

As for my ancestors, they vanished
Deep into history leaving no traces,
Nothing of me now rooted in a place.
No doubt they stumbled thru Europe
Evading pogroms, surviving ghettos,
What can it matter now, infinite time
Is made of all such, forgettable things,
And every human being starts square
With the universe, in the human state,
Only a strange adherence, the craving
For stability absent from its landscape
Ties us to loyalties not of our making.

Freedom is a freedom to sever the ties,
Watching the cut rope swing in the air,
Seeing a stone shift from the mountain
And fall into the river, the unremitting
Beauty of ordinary things, proclaiming
Don't give consent. This is never your
Country, never will seem your country,
You will never accept the grafting on
To a tree of alien belief, a sundry region
Carved from hills and trees which never
Belong to humans anyway; a delusion
We own any of this as we pass through.

What I love is a country beyond country,
The texture of an un-possessed England
Where none of the graves in churchyards
Claim my allegiance, in the anonymous,
Sure sifting down to loam of the previous.
I love this not being bound, the unbounded
Despite mythology, free of images; love
The cold night wind that breeds no illusions;
The soft sheaves of sun in the grass; light
That comes from the start of the universe,
Travels the spaces between the galaxies,
And falls indiscriminately on our small orb.

I love the wild true earth of the living,
Without the Russias, Chinas, Americas,
Without the Asias, Africas, devoid now
Of history, the contours science explores
In the cool dawn of mind, while we wait
For the air to clear from a landscape truer.
Yes, it contains the past, but as knowledge
Not constraint. Let the loyalties vanish,
And the one loyalty to humanity remain.
For this is beauty, the long western slopes,
Where the past is always a dream, a dream
Of a nightmare buried in the soil and grass.

Soil that slips through my fingers. Granite
Carries no memories, I can dig down here
To nothing of self, just a ripened emptiness.
No cages here, no prisons of the spirit, no
Boundaries, no shifts of confining power,
Simply the long soft slow swell of the land
The poem of the mind caressing the mind,
The mind that has only a common ancestry,
Easiest, hardest to extinguish without trace,
But never dead, ever living and ever dying
In the cycle of existence, past gone loyalties,
Where nothing ever of this is yours or mine.

A Presence

Coiling tube of winding bonelike shell,
Half buried filled with sand grains
And brine,
A twisted ear or eye or nostril
A delicate form
Un-alive,
Broken from something
Perished remains of something,
A sculpture smoothed
Out of no sculptor's hand,
But carved on every side
Line hollow contour
Shape of the natural.

It floats in the eye in the light
A glassy sea sends
A furthest flicker of wave to touch
And brim the pool
That holds it
And conceals it
Under the overhang of rock
Beside the trailing weed,
The lumps of jelly
Communicating
Alien life and death, beauty
Outside our making,
Anonymous form.

False Masks

Sometimes we slip and say
What we don't mean
Or believe in.
There's always one poem
In the oeuvre
That contradicts
A whole life's thought
With a stubborn
Life of its own.

No doubt something
Otherwise once slipped
Through one
Of mine, some flicker
Of alien life on the wall
Some speechless
Lump of undigested
Feeling, pretending
To a truth.

The metaphor, the image
And the mask may evade
The real and true
And take on form
In the mind
Like the golden mountain.
Every myth and fantasy
Has power
It may take a lifetime to deny.

An Aversion To Temples

All the temple crew
Finding satisfaction
In constraining ritual,
Principle of prison
Makes you free?

All the little details
Scrupulously observed,
Bells, drums, robes,
Brooms sweeping gravel,
Great school, obedience.

Most of human life
Is arbitrary, beyond
The basics, so this,
If you like communal
Being, is also fine.

I could never bow
Acceptably, always
Contradicted masters,
But played the rituals
And came out sane?

An aversion to temples,
That's something deep,
An intellectual thing,
Which as with all mind
Ends in feeling.

Don't believe, don't follow,
Don't own
To anything,
That gives away
Your precious freedom.

A Friendly Stroll

Sometimes just walking slopes of grass,
Watching the birds flicker
Through the pine-trees is fine,

There's love in that, the undemanding
Presence of the natural,
Of the soft acres of leaf and stem,

And life-forms part of the process.
We pass through on our old
Trails, free to detour.

Who can begin to say where liking
Ends and love begins,
Mysteries of relationship,

Where the path is undefined,
And in the end may be
Un-negotiable or un-negotiated.

Though we can't find a route
Sometimes it's fine just to walk
On slopes of grass and watch the birds flicker,

There's love in that.

The Poet Known

The heaviness, the sense of gravity
In the verse, I hate, I can't bear,
Though I know they're beautiful, clever
Those dense forays into language.

He's one of the people, unmet minds
I'm not sure if I like, one to avoid
Perhaps, though not reject explicitly,
A dislike is not hatred.

It's hard to put a finger on the problem,
Something to do with cloying,
Something to do perhaps with too much root,
Too much precise indulgence.

His words wing to a target, but which?
He gives a value to the physical life
I can't give, it can seem a certainty
Devoid of moral sentiment or value.

I don't discount envy of the satisfaction
Evidenced by such tight clutch on things,
Places and persons strongly seen,
The visual element, the exact eye.

As I said there's beauty. If waterlogged.
Beethoven's dancing peasants come
To mind, their clogs caked with clay,
I have the same antipathy to Wordsworth,

Perhaps it's a matter of their deep belonging,
Though all belonging is illusion,
To a region and mythology unshaken,
Personal, the vision of a child overdone,

And ultimately exhausting, enervating,
Travelling nowhere. The stateless mind
Can't sympathise with that identification
As though the soil is father of the man,

The mind is not a place. I've a soft spot
For exiles, travellers, the ones for whom
Tradition and customs were chains not
Delights, the vagrants of true lightness.

His love for somewhere does not excuse
The failings in it, as well as summer light
Darkness comes from that cloaking earth,
The killing trembles under the rural knife,

Fixity of habit is dubious blessing, equally
A prison and a freedom, there's Caliban
Trapped in the very cleft that nurtures him:
The pastoral shares our own bi-faced night.

Somehow the genuinely kind makes less
Of its kindness and its being, we speak
Too loudly when we elevate the light
That falls on what we'd be forgiven by.

Offshore

Your mind at the end of the day,
The offshore wind
Waves not timeless but the same sea
Falling in soft waves timefully,
And sifting of leaves
In the light's throat,
The universe converging on you
Though it has no centre,
Displaying you
With no mind for display.

Your heart at the end of the day
Too great for this life,
The lapping of water along the shore
Contacting the ear mindfully
And white-breasted birds
In the depths of the groves,
The world inhering clinging in you
Though it has no purpose
To be invading you
With no heart for invasion.

Your thought at the end of the day,
The syllables of evening, a stutter
A dazzle of breaking light, the cedars,
Vibrating, tremors under the air
And on the air, furious beating
Among the delicate branches,
The twilight descending on you
Though without reason
Caressing you
With no thought for caresses.

The Attenuation

The stretching out for a place that is not there,
The attenuation. Always a cavernous
A breathless yearning,
Something made of raw and watery light,
Full of wistfulness, a deep
Perception of having missed
Some vital passing
For which the absence is its own metaphor
Like the rare childhood
That a Proustian intensity
Seeks to recover
In the husks now of time past.

Its the last thinned-out trace of a spiritual
Tremor, a reaching out for a space without gods
Now, as though the gesture
Could invoke that false dominion, and a force
And power of mind not body
Filled with childish tenderness
In a dark land,
That shaped re-shaped its own bitter darkness;
Could claim the sluice of waters
The white confusions of clouds
The half-tentative unending
Conclusions that never conclude.

Earthly Sonnet

And Earth will be the last mythology,
Wrapping her being in a veil of seas,
Carrying lightly her mountain chains,
Showing her seasons, her tropic rains.

Her valleys will distil the watery light,
Her slopes descant beauty to the night,
Hers the immense realities of dream,
Hers the flow below the starry stream.

Imbued with mind? That's mind's privilege
To grant thought to a mindless stony ridge,
A depth of loam and rubble, silent grass
The wind stirs aimlessly while aeons pass.

Earth then, the last mythology as the first,
Who all other myths created and rehearsed.

Theme

Death, time and the beloved that's the theme.
It plays, yes, in a thousand different ways,
But there's the love, the beauty,
And the truth, mind's theme
Death, time, and the beloved.

On Human Strangeness

Plenty of other life in the world,
Strange to be this particular self.

Can't stop exercising this being,
Fine with everything that loves the light.

Not persuaded of Eliot's after-world,
Nor the value of abnegation and denial,

Which is more the recipe for survival
Of a failed marriage, a funeral anthem,

Than an identification with Earth
That nurtured us. But here's the thing,

There's an intellectual beauty in the darkness
And the dryness, it passes empty hours.

All that moaning with the Seafarer seems
More challenging than a sleep on the beach.

Then there are also the domes and paintings,
The deep sonatas and the moving tragedies,

In all of which there is beauty and interest,
But nothing like the beauty of thunderheads

Sailing the indigo sea blown on the wind.
Byron preferred tigers. Maybe Blake too.

If truth be known many prefer the physical
Manifestations of being to the intellectual,

And they have the better claim to reality,
Though always more vulnerable to time.

Plenty of other life, rare to be human
Compared with say being an insect, a bird,

But hardly rare enough. Too many come
Pressing on the mind with a babble of words,

Preaching their after-worlds or their abnegation,
None of which shares anything with our ancestry,

Our pass, re-pass through the sieving of selection,
The grains of wheat that fell in the winnowing fan,

And shows how mind runs free beyond survival
Into the unexpected digressions of inner thought.

There's our species, in systems raised on high,
Finished artefacts that take a lifetime's crafting,

The workings of a strange particular self in this
World. How rare it is and peculiar to be human.

What Isn't Can't

The object shone in its own place.
It was the object of being
And not perception
Though so shining.

In the mindless moment
Though man-made
It stood outside the human
In reality.

It needed a name
For lack of consciousness,
A word for the silence
Without connotations

Of intelligence
Or its lack.
It needed a word
For that gleam and gloss.

What has a boundary,
Identity, mind
Vivifies, gives life
To, its a way

How to get closer
To the object,
How to understand
It, how it shines.

The object in its own place
Seemed
To mock the transience,
Though transient.

Outside time, things shone.
Inside, the mind
Broke on the stones
Of the shore.

The object shone in its own place.
It was the object of being
And not perception
Though so shining.

At Thistle Creek Still

At Thistle Creek
In the Yukon
Ancient horse bones
Half a million years.

Our ancestors
Hurling stones,
Or spears
A million longer.

Killing
Our intimacy
With Nature.
Nurturing

Crops gave
Decency
To human
Existence.

Down from the trees
On our knees,
Learning how
To respect it all.

No Offence

We built a tall fence
The creatures can't get past,
Here
They can only hide

The ones outside
No clothes, no cars,
Move awkward, anxious
In the dust,

Or bare-pawed, alert
For us,
The things with cameras
Nets and knives.

The fence is everywhere
A cast of mind,
It shimmers in the trees,
It crosses fields,

Often we ourselves
Can't cross
Our own fences,
Out is in.

Good fences
Close out neighbours,
Wired
For purpose.

Civilisations fall
When the fences fall,
And here come
The creatures,

Tentatively often,
Over the mud and ash,
Making new trails
Through the wilderness.

Creatures of the grass
Who make no fences.

The Tenderness

It's not the power, the noise,
The achievement.
Power is hollow,
Achievement empty,
Noise soon gone.

It's not the science,
Or technology,
The commerce
Or the politics
Will save us: nor the lies.

It's the movement
Of the Chopin nocturne,
(With earth our Charon
Space our Acheron)
The moon in the ash-tree,

The tenderness.

The Empty Room

Climbing the winding stair's stone slabs
I reach long slopes
Above the limestone vale
In Nature's empty house.

The tower's topmost room,
The empty room,
Is always of the spirit
And its peace.

Here man climbs – explain
That spirit and soul are modes
Of mind and feeling,
No other than ourselves.

We scale the winding stairway
Call it life
To reach the empty room,
Its tranquility,

Though still filled with burning
Filled with deeper fires
Smouldering somewhere
Under limestone vales,

Whose rivers rise and sink,
Whose winding slabs of stone
Lift from an intimacy
To climb broad shoulders

To swell round ancient mounds
And sanctuaries.
See, the empty room
Is filled with flames,

The flames of light.
Now the climbing
Hardly seems a climb,
This height pure distance.

In Thrall To History

In thrall to history
In thrall to violence
No one is free:
Beware that grasping

We call accomplishment,
The mind grown tense
With nothing laudable,
If natural.

Beware the rhetoric:
All power depends
On words that sway
The feelings.

Pernicious roles and forms,
Those archetypes
Distort mind's freedom
And its meaning.

Defy what Plato meant
The clear outlines
That seem so clean and true,
They are the falsehood.

Action, knowledge,
Meditation
Are no substitute
For tenderness.

We are not what we think,
In thrall to history
In thrall to violence
Of body or of mind.

Our Denial

All those lonely birds:
Heron, gull, and swan,
Kestrel in the sky,
Our purposes deny.

The ice-bound swan,
Some heron's feather,
Each screech and cry,
Our purposes deny.

All those lonely birds,
Pure images
Of stooping, circling thought,
Time's mirages

By which we live and die,
Those lonely birds,
At twilight or at dawn,
Our purposes deny.

The Song Of The Sack

Gently we go
No turning back.
Everything vanishes
Into the sack.

Come red, come yellow,
Come pale, come black.
Everything vanishes
Into the sack.

Wealth no matter,
No matter its lack.
Everything vanishes
Into the sack.

Way up, way down
It's the selfsame track.
Everything vanishes
Into the sack.

Stride or stumble,
Defend, attack.
Everything vanishes
Into the sack.

Gently we go
No turning back.
Everything vanishes
Into the sack.

A Passion

Beyond a strong wind shakes the tree
With passionate intensity.
Nothing of world that we create
Can satisfy the passionate

Who'd render down the universe:
Time and space, in vision's eye
Mere tremor of a passing sigh,
A play that seething minds rehearse.

Beyond the dark glass gleams the tree,
A trembling in immensity
Indifferent to the shivering mind,
Deaf in its shining, mute and blind.

Bright moons in a burning sky,
Thoughts that in the branches wind
Transcending all that passes by
Proclaim a passion of the mind.

The Anxiety

The anxiety within is subtle,
Not a response as such to events
But a questioning all event,
Tension of self and other;

The strange greenness of the leaves
The density of world
The alien texture
Which is body itself, what matter;

The savage motion of the sky
Churning, or uncanny stillness,
The shimmering expectation
Of nothing quite specific.

A refusal to buy any purpose
But an urge to purpose,
Something no doubt out of childhood,
Pain of the maker internalised,

The creative tremor of the mind
Approaching meaning, free
Of meaning, hanging there
Obliquely in the tension.

Chaos shimmering, order seeping
From the invisible bonds,
The unrepeatably recurring, space
Swept out by pattern, time by form.

Each leaf an identity, as if with mind;
Something Coleridge saw, the fierce
Being of every being,
The continuum he denied.

The anxiety within is subtle,
An inscape Hopkins knew,
So scaring him with beauty
He sought salvation,

Which is not forthcoming.
We are the minds.
The universe is empty,
Its silver in the lake of darkness

Shining, with disquieting flames.
What's understood of this dissolving
Does not help. Mind trembles
At the sky as it is,

The peculiar magnificence
The giant presence
Of whatever broods
In whatever silence

Not ours. The shimmer
Of unintended form,
Making the heart uneasy,
Reducing us.

What We Love

Beauty in the silence under the trees.
Dust from the deer's hooves
At the wood's edge.

Dark green water runs down
The ridges of rock
To sink under stone.

What we love remembered,
Nothing else
Matters.

What we love. Tick of amber
In the pines, eyelashes
Of the sun.

A whole civilisation gone,
But too late now
To imitate the beauty

Or the silence under the trees,
A flicker of deer's feet
Lost among greenwood.

In The Window

It is our reflection in the glass
Our mask, lit by outer light,
Semi-transparent in the glass,
The face of transience, passing.

Fragile, delicate broken
Thoughts behind the eyelids,
Blake's baked face, or Coleridge,
Seems unlike ourselves.

Remembering other times
Gazing, other hours, silent
Mindless at self reflected
Light of being in the darkness.

It is our mask with trees beyond,
Slopes of flowers, shining
Through the half-reflected flesh,
To make a passing phantom.

This same moment I see you,
Or rather your outer shell,
And you elusive, the solid
As impermanent as the ghost.

Touch this surface, cool as light,
As though you touched
A whole civilisation,
Its thousand year's effort,

As though you seize
A dust-mote in the sun
A tremor of the grass,
Bird-shadow flown,

To see the gleaming face,
The self held there, flare
For an instant, gone,
Your share of life.

Of What We Have Left

That we build light, the poet's task, make a place to stand
In eternity, and make it a place of kindness, of freedom.

That we cherish the images, the symbols, which are spirit;
Take from time to give back to time, the matter timeless,

Touching the unstill flow, finding a peace beyond the pain,
In the soft sighing of leaves, in that tenderness of cloud.

Mind as Tantalus, Sisyphus, Ixion, the craving, the effort,
The restlessness, but to find the green light under stars,

The kindness infinite, the discipline of order, of freedom,
Not beauty too late but the butterfly flickering on the spire

Of buddleia. And never the temple, but always the dance.
Never the tragic echo rather the voices of silent laughter,

Quiet with gentleness. That we make form, the poet's task,
And choose a place to stand in eternity, by the river-water,

And a crossing not from Lethe, but filled with total recall,
Of what we loved, the light, of what we have left renewed.

After

Rowan, be my gateway,
Alder, loose my heart,
Apple-bough root deeper now
Show where all visions start.

Oak, be my undoing,
Beech, my mystery,
But ash spring from me where I lie
Under the greenwood tree.

All Gone, All Equal

You and I like grass, the species like a tree.
We these pure shadows of repetitiveness,
Even the brightest of us not significant,
Since there will always be the brighter,
Genius a mere painstaking taking pains;
The species something more: persistence.

The only immortality the flickering torch
Passed on; the word repeated; the eye
In love with those same images, though
Not always maybe for the same reasons;
The heroines and the heroes perhaps those
Who reproduce our gestures most exactly.

You and I like soft dust blown in the wind,
The species like a mountain, its slopes green
With possibilities, its renewals magnificent
If tedious, too much sometimes like stone,
Too heavy on the spirit, the irrational past
A rock under which the self lies screaming.

But there's a beauty in it too, the going on
Despite us, our ephemeral insignificance
Blessed by the cultivated field where they
Were buried, those passers-through, or by
The air that holds the atoms of their being,
We breathe in, in our ghostlike continuance.

Letter To A Friend

In you I find the massive innocence
That is freedom.
In you I find the impulse for the new,
The absence of the weight
Of history,
The essential human.

In you I find the beauty that ignores
The death of every beauty.
You are the single leaf reminds
The heart that we made
Nothing
Of the universe we inherit.

Pass on the freedom and the silence
See through
The subtlest of manipulations,
Create a smallest light
For those to carry
Who move beyond the light.

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