

# **On A Distant Planet**

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## Primal Light

We must go,  
back to the primal light  
(the task  
of the poem)  
to find  
ourselves.

We must  
go back,  
beneath the light  
of our star,  
to the first  
horizon.

We must go back  
to the dust  
the rain  
in the dust,  
the burnished  
grasslands.

To fact,  
form,  
and affection,  
the grace  
the fire  
of the heart.

All the being  
and going  
is Nature,  
the pulse  
of energy,  
light.

We must go  
back  
under harvest moons,  
to where  
no one goes,  
on the way.

**Red-Crowned Crane (*Grus japonensis*)**

A dance from which to make  
a civilisation. The dance of the bird  
of snow  
the sweep  
of its black-fringed  
sleeves,  
the line of beauty,  
of nature's  
deeper rhythm,  
the S of a neck  
upraised,  
a bowing, fluting,  
against the crimson sun.

The eye is lost in such grace,  
the heart,  
which is  
the passion still inside us  
our first cry  
at the dark of stars  
to the emptiness,  
this is all we are,  
this fragile nerve  
stretched outwards  
into the sky's deep,  
into the mind-deep,  
whiteness.

Here the elegant bird,  
the beauty  
in awkwardness,  
its feathery fingers  
in flight,  
the black and white  
waking a memory  
of a tiny moth,  
the chimney-sweeper,  
I, with a careless eye  
fixed on its wing-tips' white,  
mistook for a butterfly.

## White Mountain Songs

White mountain songs,  
holding snow flowers,  
the dark peaks shine,  
it is as it is.

Cloud in a mountain stream,  
pure sky filled with rain,  
down the high cliff we go,  
immaculate shadows.

Here in the tangled light,  
singing white mountain songs,  
holding flowers of snow,  
where dark peaks shine.

## On A Distant Planet

Between the dream of order  
and chaos we were born.

We learnt too much intent,  
became the unintended.

In the grasslands, savannahs,  
by the blue lakes of silence,

we drew ourselves in sand,  
opened light-filled mouths.

And on the dark cave walls  
our trembling lamp's gleam,

illuminating ochre, threw  
the eland-object's flickering.

We set those smouldering fires.  
We marked the shifts of stars.

We showed our true intent  
towards our universe.

## Still Being Born

After years of practice  
no closer to knowing  
how to be.

Making the whole world  
vanish is not  
hard:

the free, intentionless,  
the mute, ungraspable,  
the elusive.

Harder to be an accident,  
to sit in the dust, there,  
and be purified,

undisturbed, ordinary –  
the world un-vanished,  
the mind still.

## Why Not Other?

It is the ridiculous  
intentionless  
redundant  
existence of the all  
makes me smile  
and shake my head.

It is the astoundingly  
blue sky,  
the mad  
white cloud moving  
seems laughable,  
the deep green grass.

It is the glittering stars  
way back,  
beyond time,  
the tremor of singularity,  
the whiteness of nothing  
feels insane.

It is the crazy efficacy  
of our equations  
conservations,  
the how it is and is not  
other, makes me smile,  
the un-designed.

But the snow on hills,  
the darkness of the sea,  
on which  
the earthlight falls  
makes me anxious  
makes me dream.

## **No Mind Before This Mind**

What came to mind  
was not in the universe.

None of our values,  
none of our feelings.

Those are the creatures'  
gifts to the given.

Without intent,  
the substance of it, empty.

Without a mind, no mind  
fills the void.

No feeling for form.  
No core of affection.

Without a mind, no mind  
is inherent in being.

What came to mind  
was not in the universe,

the gleaming emptiness  
here, that we love.

## Under A Silver Moon

Under a silver moon  
on a distant planet  
they dream of pity  
to save their world.

In front of their star  
on a distant planet,  
abhorring violence,  
they ask what they are.

Probing the mindless  
universe they go,  
around the orbit  
of their distant star,

under a silver moon  
inventing beauty,  
delicate affection,  
plaintive music.

They are the dwellers  
on a distant planet,  
dreaming of ways  
to save their world.

## Not To Serve You

Those individual birds,  
plants, butterflies,  
each with the names  
we gave them,  
each self-made  
design.

Design without designer,  
the species each alone,  
in a richness of being  
we cannot  
know,  
will not possess.

This, the grace of our world:  
that whenever we despair  
of our own  
inhumanity,  
the alien opens our eyes  
until we see.

## Nothing Teaches, Nothing Learns

Mist over black bamboo  
mind in the green water  
nothing is sweeter  
nothing is owned.

Stars on the liquid sky  
mind in the bright cup  
nothing is permanent  
nothing is deeper.

Wind on the dark pass,  
mind in its heavens,  
nothing beside this  
nothing to know.

## Vision Comes And Goes

In a house of humming pine,  
I heard the child  
crying,  
in a house of humming pine  
in evening shade.

In the bamboo, cicadas chirred  
I saw a child  
running,  
in bamboo cicadas chirred  
on slopes of evening.

In mountains white this year  
I heard a child  
crying,  
in mountains white this year  
at evening's edge.

## The Empty House

Here in the empty house  
on a distant planet  
hear the voices.

Cold but beautiful,  
of far affections,  
gifts of grace.

Hand in the clear creek  
on this distant planet  
hear the voices.

Starlit strangely bright  
the outer orbits  
dust that glows.

This empty house is cool  
the wind blows through  
on a distant planet.

Loosed now and free  
the mind is easy  
dark is light.

## Getting Simpler

It is bright, is what it is,  
anonymous and mute,  
on the far side of the pines.

It sees, without my eyes,  
I cannot see with these  
on the far side of the pines.

White cloud comes and goes,  
bamboos creak and sway,  
all night's mindless flowers.

It is bright, is what it is,  
is past our names and mute,  
on the far side of the pines.

## Where The Gold Grass Grows

We were closer to the light  
on those prairies,  
by those caves,  
where the gold grass grows.

To feel deeper is to see just how  
the balance worked,  
what the whole thing is,  
the mechanics hardly matters.

We are not what we seem, we  
balk at reason,  
nothing that we know  
will make us wise.

The mind is the void, the void  
is being, the being  
is inside us  
our insides all around,

in the shining empty house  
in naked light  
all the values here  
are ours, we are the values.

Giving all of this away,  
moving closer to the light,  
walking in our ancient silence,  
make the gold grass grow.

## Bound Together

Saying less is saying more.  
The real work has no value.  
Earth's a nameless flower.  
Nothing here we know.

The void is inexhaustible.  
Out of it falls every thing.  
Inside everything inheres.  
To it everything will go.

Saying less is saying more.  
Deer-tracks, bird-trails, air,  
snow, wind, mist, and silence.  
Nothing here makes sense.

No merit in this no mind.  
World need not be like this.  
Studying names and forms  
never lets us through the gate.

Being less is being more.  
Unplanned process flows  
un-designed the flickering mind.  
Sun and moon from nothingness.

Affection, appreciation, awe.  
How did we create these things?  
These things were uncreated.  
Bamboos moving in the wind.

Light, light as fluttering leaves.  
Bright, bright as falling streams,  
you and I, my distant friend, so  
bound together by nothingness.

## Releasing The Pain Of The World

The hole in your head with the darkness inside  
is created by thinking  
feeling, divorced  
from the primal world  
which is golden.

The mountain paths are ridiculous trails, light  
in the April mountains,  
who can walk there,  
free of the concepts  
mindless again?

The hole in your mind with your feelings inside  
is created by darkness  
thinking, divorced  
from the first unmeaning  
the intricate wild.

The forest trails are riddled with light, on pass  
after pass on the summits  
who can live there  
free of the world  
easing its pain?

## Fern Valley

Fern valley lies deep  
in wildflowers  
those grasses,  
in intimate heat,  
the cool  
dark of evening.

Fern valley sleeps  
if something  
un-living can be  
said to sleep,  
free of mind  
in its being.

Fern valley is where  
I consider  
your presence  
and sense some far star  
in the depth  
of its gleaming.

## A Treatise On Coolness

Chill mouth  
in winter wind.  
Cold flesh  
silent sings.

With snow  
world falls,  
with moon  
it shines,

a single  
flower  
an Earth  
not mine.

## **The Hawthorn Tree**

Landscape is light  
and the life of  
the non-human world.

Here I go, walking  
on wildflowers,  
out of my mind.

Cranesbill is blue  
of an eye, is a  
salve to the thought.

The sun, and the moon, go free,  
and the dark of  
the hawthorn tree.

## Al Cor Gentil

The gentle heart  
restores everything,  
heals the moments,  
each one someone's pain.

There is no virtue  
like the gentle heart,  
the shape of it,  
the good intent.

Grace and kindness  
of the gentle heart,  
are the shared increase  
from which love flows.

There is no meaning  
like the gentle heart,  
the perfect tremor of it  
and the sweetness.

## Tacete

Silent, let the planet speak,  
let human words lose  
presence in the ear.

Seeing in the sky no  
human form, may  
paradise be always here,

in sweetness of the heart  
that drowns our art,  
a universe, free of fear;

what the dead can't know  
the tangs of light  
shine through you, clear.

Silent, let your being speak,  
let human voices  
vanish in the ear.

## In Lieu of A Manifesto

Not founding cities in time,  
but standing free in the light,

in silence, in the grasslands,  
in the cool air of midnight,

two eyes a mouth our guide;  
these the lights in darkness,

the knowledge of slow beauty,  
a trembling in the gloom;

no dreams of gods or demons;  
tight hold on good intention;

in uncut forests moving  
and with untwisted minds;

marking out no temples;  
for no impersonal profit;

but freeing self from fear,  
to have delight endure.

## Out There

They look at their moons rising.  
Is there bamboo,  
the cool sound of its swaying,  
is there affection?

They rip their world apart  
for energy too.  
They bathe in dying  
starlight as we do.

In dark woods in the mountains  
do they gather snow  
or watch the white clouds  
slowly moving?

Are they the guardians  
of mind, of values,  
beyond all violence  
past all interference?

Are their green grasses  
more and less than grasses?  
Do their hearts tremble too,  
dumb with eternity?

## Nonsense For The Wise

Where inside your mind,  
that distant planet shines,  
its clouds are pearls of light,  
its fields are vision.

Where outside your mind,  
a distant planet turns  
is further than the end  
of every space.

Nothing is what it seems,  
nor is otherwise –  
see all through yourself  
you quietly vanish,

neither into or outside the mind,  
that distant planet  
where we wander  
mindless among trees.

## **Who Are You?**

You must say what you believe,  
there is no arbiter  
no arbitration.

Nor unless you choose  
is there a conflict,  
my values are still mine.

There they watch ascending moons  
and under different stars  
consider silence.

I say love, truth, beauty still exist there  
and who are you  
to tell me otherwise?

## In All That Dark

All these animals were people.  
Minds like persons,  
before we began.

Bright dancing in the bush,  
sparks of light  
from elder branches.

If you are longing to return  
to the wilds of mind,  
there are the people,

the first persons, in the night,  
fearing death  
fearing coercion.

All those creatures  
just like us,  
all those subjects of feeling,

all that intent from non-intent,  
strange luminosity  
in our darkness.

## Distant Suns

There they live in peace, and dream,  
under silver suns,  
in purple grasslands,  
at singing dawn  
beyond the books.

There they are free, relationship  
is to them a sharing  
that unbinds, a space  
for friendship, love  
its sanctuary.

There their day and night  
is always half-light,  
their shores are borders,  
thoughts are tentative  
and slow.

Their longings never tire,  
their beliefs  
in each other  
hold eternal, their eyes  
dazed by every form

they embrace the ordinary,  
simply live,  
so hard to do,  
stare at galaxies  
reap their harvests.

On their world  
adventurous moons  
travel silently  
through cloudless skies,  
and burn the heart,

they too estranged  
or lonely, angered  
or sad, too large  
too small, too  
vulnerable to being.

In place, and free of time  
they drift and waver,  
inside the selfless self  
imagining paths  
by perfect rivers.

Their tiny creatures  
are sacrosanct: spiders,  
tree-frogs, mice,  
not quite like ours  
but equally beautiful.

They chase the gleam  
of their ideas,  
they see them clearly,  
in the pale mist there  
that softly rises.

Gentle inside, they muse  
and are open  
to the interests  
of the spirit,  
to its delicacy of motion.

Their lives are marked  
by the flight of birds,  
they never reconcile  
themselves to silence,  
they never name the stars.

They understand the need  
to experience alone  
in one's own self  
all the mystery  
and all the suffering.

They see the texture  
of their universe  
as also light,  
without intention,  
full but empty.

There they do not follow,  
do not own, have  
no faith in what they possess,  
connect their lives  
by landmarks,

sing a midnight song,  
dance with children,  
dream what they see  
in its entirety  
in its completion.

What they keep  
they carry in their minds,  
the meaning and the care,  
the silver light  
of distant suns.

## **When All's Said**

To stop describing and to look,  
to see, to forget the names  
watch the world's existence:

dark birds flicker on the blue,  
red rowan gleams, what is true  
is inside and outside the mind.

In the heart's where we un-possess  
ourselves of belief and ownership,  
go naked through the dusty world.

The sunlight clings to shadow peaks,  
bright sky falls through clear water,  
imagination shivers in the balance.

To emit the whole of self in words,  
empty the heart, does that not leave  
world itself still past the power to see?

## Cautious Hidden Eyes

On the mountain top  
sky glows, wind moves,  
pale moon  
hangs in the distance,  
grasses sigh,  
trouble goes,  
I am myself again  
beyond the stars.

Planet glistens in the black,  
our Earth  
never ours,  
one blue ball always spinning  
bouncing on nothing  
branches creak,  
cautious, hidden eyes  
they watch me pass.

## After-Light

Milk light of night, the light  
still travelling out  
from that first hydrogen fog,  
from those first stars  
that glowing ate the fog  
till time shone clear.

Milk light among black pines,  
faint hiss of galaxies  
the banded cloud silent  
hillsides dumb with dark,  
the first stars shine  
too far for thought.

We shine, you and I, in our  
moment in and out  
of time, we shine  
in darkening universe  
whose infinite ends  
are its beginnings.

No stories now, poetry  
is not the story,  
poetry is this  
the recognition,  
of the un-replicable  
irreplaceable,

the distant planet  
of the mind  
we chart each day,  
the far communing,  
that shines for us  
its brief uniqueness.

## Strange Lives

All these strange lives  
on our shared planet,  
their trails in grass,  
their gangs in flight,  
food-seeking  
slow quick wandering  
ways, their depredations  
and their patient waiting,  
their gaze at us  
our madresses.

All these strange worlds  
within, what they feel,  
how they think,  
the pain, the pleasure,  
rocky heights  
and pine-filled valleys  
above, below our road,  
the sun-dark meadows  
on the fringe of woods  
the river margins.

As good as us, the lives  
that equal ours,  
the first, the greater presences,  
we loved and feared,  
and carved on walls,  
and sought to placate,  
and tamed, and used,  
and narrowed down  
in the narrowing  
that defines us.

All those shadowy minds  
that hesitate  
at the edge of vision,  
fearing our values  
or our lack of them  
in our manifestations,  
ready to fill  
the spaces of our absence  
when we fail,  
meet Earth half-way.

All those spirits  
still inside us,  
those dark silhouettes  
that keep the far horizon,  
following where  
the lightning flickers,  
or hiding deep  
under our passing,  
graceless and graceful,  
wondrous and complete.

## Deep Forgotten

There are the distant moments,  
the far movers,  
like those too-early dead  
who like these others  
once gone are as  
though they never lived,  
names only, shapes,  
torn fragments of the heart.

There are the errors, also  
the best-unremembered,  
best turned to faceless  
statues, blank masks,  
a voiceless opera  
best left unsung  
and silent in the dark  
the deep-forgotten.

## We Shine

Through the white mist of stars  
we shine, to the white mist of stars,  
mind, to the dark slopes of the universe.

You, to my eyes, shine, among the stars,  
we shine, through the white space of stars,  
mind, to the dark slopes of distant time.

Through the white field of furthest stars  
we shine, to the white field of stars,  
you to my eyes, mind to distant mind.

## Beyond Question

Over the golden fields  
to the valley of shining limestone,  
to the sanctuary where, as trees  
return from the bright translucency  
leaf by leaf, our secrets glimmer  
that can be burden, can be freedom,  
the freedom from or the freedom to.

Over the golden fields  
of paradise that is in the human mind,  
solely, and its grassy gate delight,  
the three paths there of affection,  
being, beauty, these sensations  
of existing, the emotions  
that are always our response to time.

Over the golden fields  
to the river-margin, where the self  
is the ghost in a glass that buzzes,  
where sharp wings of the glossy divers  
ripple the pure strangeness out of being  
outwards, into the air, on into the deep  
into the coigns of silence, no less ours.

Over the golden fields,  
the drift through late summer air, this is no  
savage hollowness, this waste is wild,  
its feathery seed-heads nod and bow,  
nature is everything that moves and sways  
beyond the uncertainty within, beyond  
the why this is, beyond the questioning.

## **A Moon In The Flowing Stream**

The body is phantom flesh,  
the mind an empty space.

the green bamboo sways,  
the silvery breeze blows.

This body is ice and snow,  
this mind is flickering fire,

flakes melt there on the glass,  
while thoughts just come and go.

Body and mind do not compete,  
and that is your inner nature.

## Gifts

Down the quiet of the English lane  
the being of leaves, the existence  
of stones.

The root of being is nothingness,  
the inexhaustible nothing of space  
void of time.

Over the silence of the English fields  
the traverse of wind and light, fire  
of no-mind.

Look there is a flower, a wall, a sun  
they flicker for a moment in the dark,  
sure and easeful.

Deep in the stillness of the English night  
the lineaments of the human for a while,  
our gifts.

## No Tree Moves

Blue, is the spring flower.  
Higher, the bird calls.  
Cool of an autumn moon.  
Siftings of snow.

Grass, a shack, in the mist.  
Rain in the steel drum.  
A slow smoke rises.  
No tree moves.

## Unsolid

Their fragile civilisation holds its breath.  
A dark wind blows there from their universe.

Rising from nowhere they stumble here,  
try with mind to grasp the mind inherited.

In their passion they rise towards the stars.  
In their emotions they express endurance.

Tragedy is the space of their limitations.  
Comedy the time of their sudden freedom.

They dig the soils, they ride the atmosphere,  
They burn their fuels, slide over their seas.

Their world perilously won is paper-thin.  
Their yellow sun crinkles its pale surface.

At heart, they are afraid of the great silence.  
Behind the walls, warm themselves with words.

They have no power except against themselves.  
They only command the instance of their values.

Shrouded in fog, there, are their evanescent lives.  
Lost in the darkness where they catch their breath.

## A Sliver Of Pine

Snow falls, Being falls.  
Light bends the bamboo  
Being shines.  
By blades of ice,  
Being flows.  
Why all this Being?

For Mind there is  
no explanation.  
Between moon and wind  
no true relation.  
Only the eye,  
its penetration.

Snow clings to solitary pine,  
words clothe the lonely mind,  
snow falls, and bamboo shines.  
I send you a sliver of pine,  
etched on it the shift of time,  
around the heart.

## What Do The Birds Cry?

What is it you love beside the world,  
and the woman in the world?  
What except the summer's sweetness,  
and the winter's shrewdness?  
What is it you want from the dark  
except this flow of light?  
What is the purpose of the waterfalls?

What is it you came upon in the grass,  
or found bright in the air?  
What except the coming of springtime,  
the cold autumn death?  
What is that so deep longing at the core  
beside the gold of light?  
What is the meaning of all that appals?

What will you find within the depths of night,  
in form, or image, there?  
More than the stir of what she is, the breath,  
a bodiless presence bared?  
What does it ask of you beyond acceptance,  
embrace so hard to bear?  
And what do the birds cry in their primal calls?

## Twice

Their space that was not exactly happiness,  
nor yet quite sadness was the place  
of presence.

It was the clarity of the bird on the wall,  
at the edge of the wood, head cocked,  
its eye on the field.

It was Venus low in the West, a crystal  
glint and shine, in neutral orbit of departure  
poised there.

It was chaos churning about to discover form,  
or form dissolving through the edge of chaos,  
in space between.

It was incomplete emotion, bare gusts of feeling,  
relation, but of what to what uncertain, mind  
suffused with air.

It was the shape of self moving on depths of self  
over a universe un-selved, in front of galaxies  
holed at the heart;

the stir of matter, the escalating fall to the primal  
crush at the centre of the singularity beyond time,  
the forbidden core.

It was the wake of life parting behind the keel,  
regret on the darkness, such primeval longing,  
wordlessly.

It was passing cold through the greying half-light,  
dumb with the trees and stone, hearing the bird  
cry, twice.

## Not All Like Yours

Reverence for the creatures, have reverence  
for the creatures, you are one.

Not by number, but by individual lives,  
don't trade being, each one has

an equal right to its existence, every blade  
of grass has weight, the last one

on the road to extinction weighs no more  
than the grain in the multitude.

We must learn to step back from our control  
into powerlessness, perhaps

become a little more inhuman, a little less  
the flawed keepers of the seal.

Humility is endless. And we the gardeners  
who destroyed the garden.

Knowledge is guilt, our values tear us apart,  
yet still: have reverence.

Respect the lives, respect the many lives,  
not all like yours.

## Artificers Of Confusion

Here the order of the trees is made a chaos,  
and a wind blows in the chaos of the heart.

Here things fall and are swept to the silence,  
borne with the dissolving structure's roar.

What is this order, a chaos its opposite?  
Or is the chaos a deepest order; that light

no randomness, that displays a rule of law,  
that shapes itself in bravura of coherence,

as order out of chaos, not maker's order,  
neither rage of the sea or rage of tongues,

but breastbone of the buzzard and the kestrel,  
the pattern of cloud, delineation of shadow.

Is the heap of sand order and the desert chaos?  
Or is this storm of emotion we possess a form

that brings words to the lip, shapes to the eye,  
for Poetry is possession. The maculate order

of shining leaves falls to the immaculate order,  
bare branches and open sky are autumn shown.

Blind chaos itself is an intricacy of meaning,  
in the non-linear, feeding on itself, self-sown.

What we impose on the dark glittering ocean  
is not the body of being, and yet it is, the lines

of some regulating tremor, fine transient wake,  
sharp edge to the bay, or a midnight quivering,

a gasp of light, clear sign of mind's endeavour  
to make a form of the maker beyond the maker,

out of this roar of the chaos alive within us, or  
of the chaos at the core of the order beyond us,

the blind stir of the waves, or that lighter kiss  
of cascading spume on some Odyssean shore.

## Falling Through Being

The sky reveals the Dharma, shows the Tao.  
We see more of the small things in the grass

by the way of eternity, with the flight of birds  
like thought in the glow between evening trees.

We walk watching barren planets, silent stars,  
still wondering the possibilities of intellect,

of complex creatures from the mineral turmoil,  
of complex mind out of some complex creature,

gauging the possibility of a yet different being,  
and the perfect solitude of our own uniqueness.

Here's the spider on the leaf alive for a moment,  
out of nothing to this existence, back to nothing.

Eye shows things that move, things that don't,  
in our restless desire for motion like the cloud,

the ever-rootless from de-creation to creation,  
not to be centred, not to be formed, nor still,

wanting to be the same un-same river flow,  
never to cease, never to freeze into identity,

yet still be one, while earth and moon pass by,  
into the cottonwood leaves, under the willows,

catching the light, in place and out of place,  
the intense unreal, where mind meets universe,

no longer human. Oh, we long to be the aliens  
in the world, no more a dimension of the garden

but the change within, the deeper transformation,  
that lies beyond the equations, in the darkness,

the impermanence that stirs us, and escapes us,  
though we are that transience, a wing's flight,

a shiver of waterfall on the mountain, a shake  
of rain from the slender branch of the ash-tree.

We see more, look closer, the nearer we close  
on eternity, watch the tilt of the heron, the slow

pollen-drenched crawl of the bee on the flower,  
chasing each thought through mind, dissolving

in a continuous disintegration but still not that  
unseen tremor, below the vanishing, that beat

and tick of the world's inwardness, unmindful,  
that falling through presence into present-ness.

## **Why? Said The Child**

Why a universe rather than nothing?  
Why what is, rather than otherwise?

Why transience and not pure permanence?  
Why the thinkable and not beyond the mind?

Why the creatures and not a lifeless silence?  
Why our species and not some other species?

Why this one planet out of all the others?  
Why not a life of hill-slopes and savannahs?

Why the dark realm of thought and values?  
Why the deepest pain of our moral choices?

Why the lure of truth and of bright affection?  
Why the sensitivity to all this, why the beauty?

## Elegy In A Country Churchyard.

Dry leaves in winter air, a mind-like dance of birds.  
Life only has time for form and for affection, time  
passed otherwise is wasted, lost, is time abandoned.

There is a frame in which the past is real, metaphor  
positioned, is the person, the place and the event;  
life lived, the act of our having-been there, forever.

Time is a measure, time is not dimension, time is  
a counter of this changing present, as distance is  
of space, the amount of change between memories.

And the infinite stretches outward from the moment,  
eternity a string of infinities, and Nature this universe  
without intent, beyond itself, of no mind's purpose.

We two are there in the past as we were, in the mind,  
the ever-having-been, at best a flow of atoms in sheer  
existence, in the deeper part of that nature we destroy.

And you too, my shadow-brother, who never cleared  
the underworld, dark fore-runner meaning left behind,  
I celebrate you in this perfect rustling of dry leaves,

of a peace and freedom easy to understand, yet hard to  
know. This stone a stone made of what once was living,  
in gone seas. We are miming in the dark, as Ovid said.

## The Trace, The Trail

Some love the trace, the trail,  
to leave their trace behind  
to carve a trail, is surely  
all that the mind desires?

Sculptor, painter, poet,  
all music that replays,  
carving the wave gone by,  
leaving its wake behind?

All the past is the same  
distance away from us,  
behind a wall of fog:  
here is the trace, the trail.

World must be self-taught,  
self-made, and self-so,  
it is itself the trail,  
is the wake of its own flow.

But I love the vanishing track,  
I love the hidden life,  
the taste of the unseen spring,  
the shape of the uncarved block.

## And Kindness Too

Form, fact and affection, freedom  
and peace. To make a paradise  
of mind's intent, a paradise  
tenable only in the mind,  
is to see your beauty shine.

To free the mind from oppression  
in release, from all the past,  
from all experience, and simply  
be, not travel after knowledge  
is to envisage you in eternity.

To follow the slow beauty,  
if we can feel that longing  
of the heart and still be free,  
what the dead cannot know,  
is to find joy in your reality.

To enter the sacred space  
the mind creates, where  
no one is for sale, where  
what we love kills fear  
and takes its place, in you.

Such is the paradise that we  
can make, and let things shine  
in their transcendent being,  
light as thought, and find  
equity and grace, and kindness too.

## Summoning Trees And Creatures

In the wild reaches of the furthest places  
at last we see ourselves, the mirror clear.

The curious corners of the wing-filled grass,  
are where the whispers of our being glimmer.

Though there's no way back to Eurydice  
the lyre still hums, the near leaves darken.

Though she is lost, slipped back to primal  
stillness, into the real, there is still a music.

Though Orpheus pines, the wind is quick,  
the wake of light travels above the water.

The voiceless corners of the angled mind  
are where we hear the whispers in the grass.

In the heart's reaches, in the darkest places  
the light is shining, and the mind is clear.

## All That May Care

Those who love the landscape without people  
are not necessarily void of all human empathy.  
And those who embrace the crowd in the light  
are not immune to a stillness flecked with stars.

The rain on the roof beats out all sorts of minds,  
in wind-squalls that bend trees, creak branches  
full of the voices of the living and the dead,  
that collect inside us while we laugh and cry.

Those who search out solitudes free of faces,  
are not the loneliest nor the sole world-losers.  
Those who seek out themselves in others seem  
the lonelier still, and are doomed to be defeated.

If landscapes without people seize the heart  
which is a mode of mind but deeper, conscious  
of how lightly all crowds engage the real self,  
that mover-in-darkness flecked with agile stars,

that sinks itself in water, burrows below stones  
where the tiny transparent creatures stir sand  
and a finest gravel; if my thoughts turn slow  
in that minute whirlpool, that universal pulse

of abandoned energy which, somewhere between,  
marks aimless infinities and eternities beyond  
the visible fabric, the human still hides in that,  
in the space non-human, all that may care for us.

## New Day, New Tools

No we're not programmed for eternity.  
The culture flexes, the language shifts.

Mind is a set of processes as any other,  
where the meaning of the world inheres.

There is a human nature, and there isn't.  
The culture grew more complex, so we.

The sense of every word is in the context.  
The context of a word is all its meanings.

What is our context, singers of the future,  
for whom mind is no longer simply flesh?

In the deep brain a million concepts flourish.  
In the new language new threads tug ideas,

unravelling meaning, in the pure unforeseen.  
Under the painting's surface old lines hide.

## Not Yet

As for the perfect calm, the silence is 'not yet'.  
Deep enough, this water would fill the stream.

The world has nothing to hide, is as it is.  
All that's beneath the depth is on its surface.

One with the scent of flowers, and the moon  
in our hands, we know the meaning is not yet.

The world is a glitter of light and a flake of bone,  
a blade of an antler under an untouched meadow,

or the dance of baryons in the quantum silence,  
and the intergalactic million-fuelled brightness.

Though we come and go the species is not yet.  
As for the perfect calm, that is still beyond us,

beyond sad violence, and all that separates us.  
The mountain flowers glitter, in gold brocade.

The mountain waters fill the brimming mind.  
We can almost touch the beauty, but not yet.

## Difficult Departures

Nothing is alone in the universe.  
Everything a part of the process.

We can as well abandon the process  
as we can free self from humankind.

Mind disappears but not the protons.  
We circulate endlessly as energy.

We can as well leave the universe  
as we can transcend humankind.

Only deep in the mind we seem alone,  
and what we love, sacred and distant.

It takes a hand to reach, a word to cry,  
a memory to stir, the strength to see.

The clouds and water, they are not alone,  
moving without thought and outside time.

They can as well leave this world of ours  
as we can leave the thing we were behind.

## Alien Dark

There is the older, ancient, deeper England,  
below the walls and gates, under the fields.  
So there's a deeper planet, wind and cloud  
cloud without name, blowing from the sun.

Under the wintry grass, on high green hills  
sloping west, with the eastern moon behind  
as huge in the stillness, this lost England:  
doyen of light, ridges and shoals of being.

Laid down in shapes of bone, their blades  
beside them, coins, helm, or buried stone,  
laid under mounds, but no longer waiting.  
Person-less precincts, tremor-less groves,

it is that alien space that we need to see,  
that place that is not human, where we  
might rise again to breathe life of the void,  
and chafe at the littleness, and feel the fire

blown from the galaxies, watch silver  
grass glitter in the grass-green breeze,  
bent but not broken by the blind power  
of process stirring inward, innermost.

Not our past, but ever alien futures  
grappling the mind, the flickerings  
of a possibility waving in the clouds,  
are what we dream, though lost time

grips the heart, on lonely shoulders  
of the western hills, as if its shadow  
stood by a barrow, grass and stone  
made whole, fronting the alien dark.

## The Nonsense Of The Eye

Truly this is nothing,  
the skein of forms  
lifted in the dark  
a one quick passing.

What is fundamental  
is not what we are,  
is the world itself,  
the alien glimmer.

If there's no mirror,  
and no dust to settle,  
this is what we have,  
is still our being,

the inexhaustible  
being of the flowers,  
for whom no deeper  
meaning signifies,

than the flare of form.  
What does not exist  
is what exists, its sense  
the nonsense of the eye.

## In Place Of Idyll

Blue grass to willows and the wood's edge.  
The softest breeze stirs the golden feathers,  
the feathery seed-heads, the dream of us  
moving between us in the hidden spaces.

Blue grass to the blue water, palms of leaves  
wave in the rainless air, after the rainfall  
stirring the blue water, after the patterns  
of light that spelled us, after the tremor.

Grass by the dry-stone walls, willow grass,  
at the wood's edge, lay down our heads  
in the wildflower fragrance, in the beauty  
of what from our hands was not created.

Green grass glittering on the long slopes,  
fields of grass, blades where our strange  
communion glimmers, where we rise,  
mind-ghosts in the soundless afternoon.

Blue to the willows, and the wild ochres  
of time's un-miracled godless sacrament,  
its hush of our hearts, bright predicament,  
on to the wood's edge in the softest breeze.

## Prosper's Library

In his green cave of light  
the word is dark.  
He interprets  
the outer darkness,  
it has leaves.

Though there is  
nothing left to know  
in the future's glass  
or of time past,  
he still gazes,

his eyes consider  
unseen pages,  
an oratory  
brushes his lips,  
almost a kiss

of the vanished spirit,  
finding emptiness,  
that echoes deeper  
in the empty glass  
impenetrable.

He is what he has been,  
and now is nothing.  
The conjuror  
of cloud-shadows  
must not speak,

must not teach the night  
its meaning  
or how it gathers,  
or how the glimmerings  
of starlight spell.

It is as it is.  
The play is over,  
the serious matter  
of ocean can begin,  
the taking soundings,

an island of the mirror,  
that renders only self;  
and there's no hope  
that what will fall  
from the sky is light.

The night is deeper.  
The children have gone on  
into their own book,  
now, their own joy,  
written in blood.

The green night glows  
with firefly pageants,  
while waves whisper  
over primal deeps,  
another language.

The mask of grace  
is the shape of self  
its cave its darkness  
the furthest shadow  
in the glass.

The library of silence  
welcomes travellers,  
Being its natural  
tongue, of stones and trees,  
a babble of nothing

or that emptiness, quiet,  
in which the fire glows,  
moon shines,  
the wind speaks  
time's soliloquy.

## Traveller

Traveller in the womb of night,  
twisting fibres of delight,  
in your mercy, speak to me  
of the heart's eternity.

What we choose is what we are,  
what we love is what will be  
left to us, our legacy  
in turn, to turn below the star,

the one that shines before it dies  
to rise again in other skies,  
showering fires of delight  
travelling in the womb of night.

Peace you are, and are to me  
brave freedom of the godless sea,  
of universe, intentionless,  
that cannot pity, love, or bless,

except we gift it what we are,  
the leavings of a fiery star,  
our immortal legacy,  
I spoke to you, you spoke to me.

## Risen

It is in a solitude of ice and fields  
that bold sun comes,  
shaft and stalk of impenetrable cold  
flung from its head,  
anthropomorphically,  
quenching our fears,  
altering the bad to good,  
ending finality.

It is in the palm of the hand, the edge  
of the eye, the lips it comes,  
crying that nothing is frozen, this is light,  
the night a semblance,  
time a phantom, truth  
this symbolic moment,  
where mind can live, beauty  
enough, love enough.

Over my green village it moves bright  
tongues, but not in metaphor,  
defies a savagery, hums in eternity,  
demands we choose  
our values, creates now,  
ridicules destruction,  
as some poor reflex of the baffled  
heart, a deficiency, a lack;

flexes spacetime and digs us deep,  
to circle the booming  
hollow void of winter, heads in the wind,  
and there redeem  
whatever we have done  
or could not do,  
as if, though not in itself a god  
to the godless, sufficient, risen.

## To Learn The Self

‘To learn the self is to forget  
the self’ said Dogen.  
This is hard.

Not learning the void is not  
knowing the way.  
That is easy.

Having learnt the self, the void,  
returning to emptiness  
is subtle,

it smells of green leaves and pine,  
tastes of stone,  
is painful

painless mystery, like love  
of that formless other,  
enduring.

Having learnt the self we laugh  
at the last dark fear.  
That is hard.

The movement of the world  
is all around  
the light inside.

## Whispers Of Everyday

Whispers of every day, tremors of meaning  
be as you say to me, form in its seeming,  
telling the traveller all is forgiven, all  
this strange misery made of our dreaming.

Texture of things that are calm the dark mind,  
in visions of un-vision, eyes for the blind.  
Nothing is permanent, this is the dance,  
not as we thought it was, nor as we find.

Whispers of distance, planets gone turning  
round pity's foolish star's elegant burning,  
your touch is all I need, air that confirms  
the gasp of delight, ache of our yearning.

Shelter our unbelief, what we believe in  
the voice of the senses, tremors of meaning,  
bringing the voyager quietly to rest, there  
in the far firmament, silent, bare, gleaming.

## Planetary Future

A world of power moves to its monoculture.  
The species (no purpose set beyond survival)  
clings to a savaged planet, embeds itself  
in alien forms to advance the restless mind.

Nature (everything outside mind's irreality)  
shimmering in every grass blade, sliding  
slow and soft-mouthed through the mud,  
goes on being Nature, only robbed of that

dignity mind gave it. Undignified strength  
never made inner beauty, the beauty came  
like kindness and freedom from within,  
to dignify strength with momentary light.

A world part-consumed simmers gently,  
survives the restless species and its cries,  
in the dark pine, in submerged creature,  
subterranean insect, night-moth on wing.

No way closer to that. The species will  
accept its heritage, the ever moving-on,  
the gleaming ships, the far-off galaxies,  
not into the new, but into the unexplored.

## What Merit?

'No merit at all', said Bodhidharma.  
Why build, moon, snow and flower?

The cool sky flows in all directions.  
No direction's best. Melt fills rivers.

Down the slopes of pine, eye and mind  
go dancing on the needles in delight.

The significance of power is nothing.  
It takes us nowhere. Has no purpose.

Purposeless leaf swirling in the stream,  
or outward through the air, rejoices mind.

Don't blame the others: to be ourselves,  
the nebulous shift of memory and light,

that asks why build, driven by the forces  
of being what we are for no good reason.

## Little Letter To A Friend

The child hugs everything to its heart,  
finds something in the dust, laughs  
at falling down a slope of grass, or  
leaping in the space between stones.

I smile in the night to think of all those  
generations making children, writing  
nonsense, trying to outguess their time.  
I see their harsh, their softening faces.

Either we take the universe too seriously  
or not seriously enough, living here  
in the ruins of a culture, seeking friends,  
hugging everything clear to our hearts.

I take you too seriously, but not enough,  
and the garden, and the garden's night  
whose stars shine through me. I take  
cognisance, though never to be known.

## Life Outlives

A death in art is not the true death,  
mere performance. The pain is never  
the pain. Lear is a tedious old man,  
Othello a fool, the winter's tale a tale.

The abuse of self, the self-indulgence  
of art is not truth. Expression is never  
being. Dante climbed a hill but not  
the self; myth is myth, Ovid knew.

That exploitation of our own death  
or pain in art is no profound depth  
of meaning. Life is the deeper song,  
its tenderness, a refusal of darkness,

the turning away from terror, despair.  
Macbeth is a murderer, Hamlet a dupe  
confusing his own mind with reality,  
which is forever unreal. Homer was

right, the meanest life alive is worth  
more than dead Achilles, though we,  
deceived, imagine otherwise. Crime  
is no beauty, nor aesthetic mayhem.

This is the age of the instantaneous,  
where shock and the metaphor are  
all, and the symbols are no symbols  
but at best a game of futile imagery,

passing, enticing and exciting, then,  
once gone, devoid of lasting meaning.  
I read the poem but every single line  
is smoke and mirrors, is coruscation.

Byron liked horses, women, that tiger  
more than the fierce merciless claws  
of literature. Not politic, but no lie!  
Rimbaud abjured. Life outlives us.

## **Full Fathom Five**

Beneath the waves, pure silver shoals  
dance to bright predators, they flare  
caught in the filtered sunlight where

a right whale contemplates the Pole,  
the makings of its heart laid bare  
in bones beyond which breakers roll.

Those fathoms of wild sea declare  
deep origins of sense, and scroll  
white waters on the burning air,

brave oceans where the embryo  
swims the source to learn the goal,  
bathed by a far star's circling glare.

## New Found Land

Below bright galaxies you move,  
their furious light is in your hair,  
this universe your beauty proves,

and mine the sigh that cuts the air,  
for all those arabesques of doves,  
whatever lives and dies and loves.

You are the wilder pulse of time,  
my beating heart is in your hand,  
your loveliness your only crime,

here in the darkness where we mime,  
where others fail to understand  
the mystery of this new found land.

## Alignment

A line of five planets before dawn  
in a sweet chill night  
exceptional,

and the voice of poetry concentrates;  
what use without  
a life-intensity

that is nothing of the social,  
everything of the dark  
its rare alignments.

I mutter the names of those five  
planets there might be  
beyond this system too,

sweeping incessantly about  
a star, blue-white or red,  
provoking thought

out there, of randomness,  
of loneliness,  
earth, water, fire.

## That Gleam

It's not that the robots once there  
will supersede us,  
the greater mind,  
but what they might miss  
of this, what they might  
yearn for, unknowingly,  
our rootedness in our biology,  
our long history, at heart,  
our great attempts that failed.

It's not that on their far stars they  
must hanker for home,  
or mistrust Mozart;  
home is where the mind is,  
and this, only the one blue  
place of our strange begetting:  
they might like dogs and insects,  
the magic of old gone cultures,  
our laughable demons, gods.

It's more that they won't be us,  
and may not need  
our kind of love, aesthetic,  
owning their own,  
aliens not so alien, like us  
but queerer, colder, purer,  
hard to take, if you're obsolete,  
like Romans to a wordless tribe,  
powerless ever to articulate,

the sense of loss, of vanishing,  
an unimagined people  
of the dust faced with a new  
civilisation, theirs,  
even if your efforts made them  
indirectly, if your ancestors  
laboured to breed their  
forms, which are not ours.  
It's that odd gleam they have.

## Green

Tired of post-something-or-other ironic laughter,  
I like the grass.

Its greenness is our bass note,  
not the blues of the sky, nor  
the yellow-white sun, nor  
the red metallic spilling of blood,  
the carmine tide, rather the green  
of rain-wet leaves, dripping  
their paint, its glitter in fields,  
its way of being split by walls,  
framed by stone,  
climbing cliffs, or tingeing  
those seas of childhood,  
the green over sand.

Tired of the cleverness of similes and metaphors,  
I like the stalks

of a pale, a withered green winter gasp  
of light and subtle sound, the call  
to whatever it is deeper in us  
that knew the grasslands, knew  
the signposts of ancient trees,  
the needles on snow-black branches  
poking through to our present.  
I like the water over the dam green,  
the wind green, the green depth  
of our love, the never mine  
the always shared, the green  
fire of your being.

## Space Beautiful

The little triangular patch of wooded ground  
where someone has been planting  
saplings with translucent sun-red leaves,  
and others with green stems (what are they?)  
absorbs the heart,  
which is itself small, sequestered,  
but enough to define the Human,  
against this Nature, which is disused  
quarries, smooth limestone hills  
themselves not wild, tamed  
over centuries, almost,  
like the heart.

The bare trees satisfy, the enclosing walls,  
(drystone, fieldstone, old clearances  
of land) the leaf-fall twigged turf floor  
of the wood, all that eases the eye,  
quiets the thought,  
calms that contrast between things born  
of the long genetic drift, the sea  
of forms, rocks out of fossils, plants,  
birds, clumps of ash-boles, briars,  
and the inner processes in time  
that are our being, the unseen  
landscape's thought.

This is where the bounded fact of a thing,  
the life of a dark three-sided slice of earth  
threaded by tree-roots, rain, moles, worms  
below, light above, meets the aesthetic  
(why so beautiful?  
its answer there still teases and eludes)  
and an affection, like a sacredness,  
not to be cut, touched, violated,  
hurt, this free, this peaceful artefact  
carved of pure nature, reconciling  
mind with its planet, time  
with space beautiful.

## The Planet He Saw Into

What he encapsulated was hers too, yet not hers.  
She (the personified Nature) must be the place,  
of sheer necessity, that all he was must exist in.

Yet what he knew and felt was simply his own,  
as the planet inside him, the planet he saw into,  
all he had without speech and his sole speaking.

He could not be told his fate, and only by being  
his fate could he tell what his being might be  
divorced of its movement, bereft and reunited.

He drew the light of the stars around his mind,  
he dispersed his mind among the whirl of stars,  
She was the moon too, blank and personified.

He was an image of the moon, and yet himself.  
He could only be a movement of what he was,  
and not what he was, and hers was not to be his.

Hers was the cry of the kestrel, and not merely  
the kestrel, the cry it could not retrieve, the call  
it could utter but not be: she could, and was all.

She was the matter that crushed, the light that  
burned, the ache in the heart, and the heart too,  
but the perception, the delicacy, the perception,

the seeing, and seeing the seeing, the staring on  
into the self, and the sky outside self, the black  
ground of the galaxies, grasped and un-grasped.

What he sought to know could not be known  
by knowing, could not be separated from self,  
was Hers in her greedy entirety, hers in no self.

In the silence of sleep he heard the wind blow,  
but not the wind that was blowing, the screech  
of the hawk but a hawk of the infinite, crying

in Her and another in him, and both in delight,  
the sleeper a world, and the world of the sleeper  
going on deep in the frame of the dark unknown.

With this of his being he loved her, She ever-true,  
whose loveliness language like music, the dance,  
or the colours of vowels, pure perfumes, the taste,

touching the flesh-mind, then always transforms.  
Not thinking of Her, he was still thinking of her,  
until at the end of thinking he might become her

inner forgiveness, no longer found stealing a form  
not hearing the kestrel, but being one with the bird  
beneath its own cry, one with the cry then unheard,

that only the bird heard, only She heard, the crying;  
and what is more real, the call unheard or the heard,  
the movement of air of a cry, or the cry of meaning?



## Galactic Heart

How beautifully at night you prove,  
(inside the confines of the dream,  
that space where my galactic heart  
drowns in the silent starry stream)  
how lovers in the dark must move  
to find in each the unmoving gleam.

No moment heals the grieved-for leaf  
sere autumn takes; it grips the mind,  
falls sealed in blindness, yet beneath  
the earth unmade unmakes our grief  
by being that which, hand in hand,  
we must resurrect to understand.

How beautifully at night you show  
the un-purposed formless how to flow  
from ledge to ledge, and dark to dark,  
as wind-swept leaves in fading light,  
or wind-blown clouds the ever-bright  
they reflect your absent presence so.

## The Dark Ditches

Slow clouds that move in tune with my slow thought.  
All poetry is elegy: in the quiet  
of the woods I make my peace with life,  
by field-edge or wall, in the dark ditches.

In reality, reality for me  
was only ever a distraction from poetry  
from slow thought, the silence and the beauty  
of a blue sky of plain white clouds, the play

of light, and life a serious matter.  
An ancient landscape this: it anchors me,  
like the history of intellect, thoughts  
drifting independently through time

almost without mind, and yet always mind,  
in the long quiet where feeling becomes  
sentiment, in the calm between events,  
where history makes itself, undeclared

in slightest actions, in the depths and not  
the glitter of surfaces. We must trace  
the evolution of love. There can be  
no greater love than now, or deeper beauty.

The how of the universe that brings us  
no intent or value, will never satisfy  
us more, nor thought move more slowly,  
down the dark ditches swallowing the sky.

## The Only

Red sunlight at evening on far glass  
over the valley, glitters.

Violence is the only evil, violence  
of the body or the mind.

Let a silence without voices speak,  
of unheard voices.

The creatures here, are they the only  
ones mindful of the universe?

From a world without intent come  
our intentions,

from this universe where the only  
values are human.

Is our species ending another  
beginning, or is mind

only complete in the flesh, in passion,  
the sexual, desire for purpose?

I sing the poetry of mind,  
like water under the ice,

we, lest we find no mirror in the stars,  
the naked singularity of Earth.

## The Illusion Less

There is no trace of Adonais there,  
in those veils of stars,  
no Lycidas, in that whelming tide  
of galaxies, no shore  
of souls, no paradise  
that which is in the deep mind only.

It was a sweet dream and the laurels,  
brittle, the berries, dark,  
all merited, it was the pastorage  
the spaced ships glide  
beyond, docking there  
with stranger worlds, and harsher.

But the nightingale, oh the night bird  
of the species, continues.  
It transits curious glades and verdure  
singing in bell-like  
notes of complex hills,  
and silver planets orbiting their star.

And though the artefacts are never  
the same, the silences  
are like, the unheard voices, pining  
to be beyond time,  
though they know  
the dancers on the vases are unreal.

## What They Find There

*For in that burning glass  
they see such visions pass...*

There is the music of that silvery-grey  
(are the notes ending or beginning, do  
the fingers rest or flicker into life?)  
There is civilisation and the pastorage.

There is man who ends and woman who  
creates, there are far hills, deep greens,  
a misted stillness, the subtle silence  
poised between mutations, tricks of light.

The grasses are alive (in the right hand  
corner) there is flesh, clothes, clouded  
hair, intimate faces, mind embodied,  
the feelings, dare we say the thoughts

of the bird as it flies. Not only there  
does the nightingale survive, the species,  
but the pure idea of the nightingale.  
We must order our world into meaning

as they do, as they assert their values.  
We must make meaning, there is no other  
source, while there is of order (outer), no  
other source for value, we must be mind.

We have had truth, and we have had love,  
now we have beauty on this sunlit slope  
though the faces are shadowed and over  
the distant sea that stormy light suggests  
the anxiety of nature.

## Least Of All

Who knows what I am least of all myself.  
Who knows who you are not your name.

Not sacred holy everything is sacred wholly.  
There is this vastness, there is this tininess.

Something in every pebble, every dust-speck  
something in every flicker of mind, Being.

The moment is never a space of time you are in,  
but movement of space, the space in your process.

Inside the nothingness of no intent, there tremble  
the mountain and the flower, a cold moon rising.

Who knows what you are not your name.  
Who knows who I am least of all myself.

## A Sheet Of Light

The multitudinous life of wild nature,  
is the world intentionless, therefore free.  
Here is the freedom of our longing, this  
pollen we leave behind to leave no trail.

There is more than the one life we might  
have lived (being of the species) but only  
one life we shall: irreality is our medium,  
and we neither self nor universe, but both.

Samsara, nirvana is void and multitude.  
Though we know the desire, the inability  
to return to our origins, to womb, to nature,  
we own the great vision of the spontaneous,

the cradle of form, intentionless space-time,  
and though it destroy the garden, only mind  
is the maker of value, the maker. No love or  
pity there among the stars, no truth or beauty

unless mind dreams it so. There are no ghosts.  
Nothing of us returns though we might dream  
the nightingale's imagined permanence true,  
an eternal dance, eternal notes, eternal lines,

though we might wish the individual heart,  
and not the species were enduring, yet still  
transience is beauty, passing life; not death  
which is pure absence, nurturer of nothing.

Shadows, *sfumato*, the tower looming there  
against a sheet of light, in imminent change,  
posit the lasting fires, the fluidities of time,  
in us the little more lasting than the flowers,

less than the crinkled hills. Point at the stream,  
the ice-cold mountain flow, mind is water,  
and yet the thoughts of my mind burn clear  
in yours, and the idea outlasts my vanishing.

## Green Moon

So much is in the heart, every  
tree alive, every run of stream,  
the whole thing moves,  
and grasses move, tinkling  
in the light.

So much is more than us, deep  
pockets of shadow, tiny  
creatures, fragile as glass  
dancing on leaf-stems  
coruscating.

Ice-ages, a hundred peaks, the flow  
of whole hillsides in the air  
sifting to pine-dust, seeds,  
waves of pure rock  
swelling, lifting.

So much cradles the heart, nurses  
its wildness, helps us remember  
to be in our senses again,  
in the strange country  
of sweet landscape.

Millions of years getting to be  
human, a few to lose it,  
a moment to regain, fire  
in the stones, green moon  
in the branches.

## A Falsehood In Stone

Even far out the lie is heavy, the truth  
is light. This world is lacking in intent,  
is weightless: it brings our freedom.  
So don't tell me what poetry should do.

Speak the truth, and not the accepted lie,  
though the real is delicate, as the false  
is touched with the dubious majesty  
of rhetoric like those spires that quiver.

The universe is void of purpose, lovely  
in emptiness, is not like the cut stones  
of Chartres, hollow now at the centre,  
though there is beauty in their ascent,

and beauty is truth, in a sense, as Keats'  
ode says, is the shining fact in the eye,  
beauty for us, though a beauty of myth,  
of the resonance of values, not of faith

that echoes in the window's circling rose,  
its time and space a Hindu or a Buddhist  
wheel of being, the Dharma, Siva dancing,  
all religion's bounds that insight questions.

Since for us the challenge is not in rules  
or laws (they only serve to move societies)  
but in values, the ethics of the grieving mind  
and heart, our unclear choices of deliberation.

And the universe is not some afterlife, some  
formula deduced from our bitter dreaming,  
but that which presents free of authority,  
makes no demand, exists beyond possession,

while, bound through its history only, its genetics,  
the human self is free, free as those wanderers  
who once walked the plains, our other selves,  
on a planet centuries, light-years far from this,

buried in memory and the unyielding ground.  
Refuse the lie, however beautiful, its leaden  
darkness, its long intellectual cowardice.  
The lie is not love, or ultimately beauty,

which wants clarity, integrity, consonance  
of a creative (underpinned by never a power;  
of mind that made religions and undid them)  
where ethics form, where values take their life.

Even far out, the lie is heavy, the truth  
is light. The universe passes through us,  
we through it. We are the givers of graces,  
fragile though we are, and brief and slight.

## **Figure And Shoreline**

The sea-green wind shivers her masque of water.  
Silent she stands on the glitter of the wave-forms.  
Spring in her Florida is neither wild nor budding,  
but a bayou permanence of indigo and viridians,  
from which she dyes the sunsets and the shore,  
with which the rainbow clothes her nakedness.  
And what the mind lacks as it sweeps the night,  
is her insouciance, her undreamed-of futures.

## The Eye Beholds

The weary body as such, that somehow weaves  
against the light of the universe, floats  
and falls to emptiness, yet still finds  
depths in the image of the flowing stream  
from which it takes each day its inspiration,  
hangs on the precipice of time, so falters,  
retrieves itself, a semblance then of poise,  
teeters on the tightrope, Nietzsche's dancer,  
or is it Klee's, gathers itself in the winged  
or finned, or furred, and flies miraculously  
somehow anyhow into the whirlwind's eye.

The heart fatigued by all this monstrous show  
somehow delicately binds mind to the friend  
flesh to the lover, substance to the dream, lives  
in what kills, and dies into all that engenders  
further being, knows neither light nor fire  
but breathes through both, burns at the centre,  
cherishes those values powered by the self,  
subtle as self, that cannot make consistency  
from the inconsistent, blind chance, force,  
the wind that roars in the mountain pines,  
but is the body's eye, and the eye beholds.

## **Not Yet Enough**

Compassion is unbounded.  
What shall we do  
with a heart that feels pity  
even for insects, trees,  
the small bird in the dark,  
the thrush's child?

What shall we do, empathy,  
with all this monster,  
violence, the evil  
of the world never condemned  
enough, allowed to gather  
at the living heart?

Down with your causes,  
and your interests:  
the future of the human race  
is ethics, deeper value  
than we now exhibit,  
an end to politics,

to power, except in the name  
of our humanity  
which the frustrated mind  
finds in its gentleness:  
look to another planet  
there beyond the stars.

## The Bridge

That soft bright blue under the bridge,  
that more than reflected sky:  
there we two drown,  
or sigh a summer's beauty.

It is an arched brow (twin thoughtful  
eyes gaze down to silence  
or into the discreet  
rippling murmur of light passing)

the bridge between us or the one  
over which you pass and I  
in strange enchantment  
to another side of the universe.

Look closer, and its stones shine,  
stars glitter at the surface,  
shadowy planes beneath.  
What does it gaze at?

Some deeper aspect of ourselves,  
some brighter flow?  
What could be deeper  
than those fresh willows,

hazels, those grassed banks  
of curving time,  
that see too much and leave  
us here, their emblem?

## End Of Harvest

No longer incarnate in the flesh,  
or not quite,  
though it took a long time  
getting here  
in every sense,

we watch the blue-green skies,  
the crimson seas,  
rotating far too quickly  
round a star  
and to what purpose?

No longer slaves of our biology  
tell me the things  
you see, with your new sensors,  
tell me what we may be  
beyond the pale.

Here, in a distant part,  
it is the galaxy itself  
we now call home,  
past Earth, one city now  
and much like Rome,

power and religion both  
contending for  
the remnants of the order  
science and mind  
brought, to leave behind.

Tell me the human future,  
not our fate rather  
the unseen, un-prophesiable  
texture of the journey,  
and find me values there

greater than love, truth, beauty,  
on which to found  
the real creation, ours;  
Mind a star singing  
in the farthest field.

## Breathe It Away

In the green mountain light  
that falls across your skin  
that agitates my mind  
I know your Self within,

the silent, stranger self  
the one that occupies  
the sweet, uncanny flesh,  
that mitigates the lies.

We never knew the minutiae,  
the flat pale days  
or how the voiceless eye  
returns a gaze

from the recess of familiarity,  
we have eschewed  
the paraphernalia of a life,  
things, that intrude,

haunted the undescribed,  
imagined fire  
consuming the furniture  
of being, chose desire,

mountains that are not mountains  
and then are  
the topmost peaks of mountains;  
chose their light,

the imaginary folds of space,  
the coils of time,  
whatever warms heart  
and mind, the inward rhyme,

or this green depth and setting  
of the moonlit plain  
over which stars unset  
and we, again,

become the duskier music  
that will stay,  
outlast this universe,  
breathe it away.

## Leave Us Something

Here where the twin suns shine we are still the same,  
still the mind wild, the recalcitrant heart  
seeking its vindication, a hare in the moon,  
a moonlit skein of stars on silvered leaves.

This the simplicity, truth, of distant Earth:  
it is not the persistencies, the light, defines us,  
but the forms in the shadows the shifting forms,  
the shapeless swirls, the lines and darts of thought,

the seascapes inward under the dim lids glistening,  
the crashing folds of waves, the far blind falls,  
that ape our perplexities, seem our dumb mirrors,  
simpler than truth in their mastery of occasion.

Here too the meadow gleams, there are flowers  
in the flare of fields, the eyes look to the inner  
secret places, refusing the noon endorsement,  
that past is future and in the future, meaning.

Nothing is like your mind. This is the same  
planet from which you left, here arriving,  
despite its magenta skies, its umber hills,  
never quite defined by its trajectories,

mind, that is, never quite hemmed in by time,  
never the slave quite of its own construction,  
free in the unseen open-ended, how we  
should keep it, determinate coruscation,

not looked at here too closely like the leaf  
whose veins of being glitter and retreat  
far from the gaze into the fractal depths  
which are unknown even if knowable.

Leave us our secret, that outer offers no  
resolution equal to our nakedness,  
that the body vanishes inside itself,  
that the eye projects the eye, then finds

perception in the soundings of the scene,  
the ear predicts its sense and mystifies  
the listener with the heart's interpretation,  
a more than singing, an inhuman singing.

Leave us the privacy of all this pleasure,  
the bound aesthetic, the unified delight  
of a single thrust of a concerted dream,  
the flavour after flavour after flavour,

of the unique unlooked-for arabesque,  
a recapturing of fire, a ridge of form  
extending under snow, but a strange snow,  
bright with desire, savage with prescience.

## Better Still None

You walk where the ancient people walked,  
below pueblos carved in the limestone cliff,  
see millions of years of water cutting away,  
or thousands of years of tribal consequence.

You go out of yourself and vanish there,  
you throw yourself away, no more return,  
disappear through the gates of sighing grass,  
never looking back. You enter into nature.

If we must invent gods, let them be gods  
of trees, and stones, anything un-minded,  
anything non-human, beyond our laws,  
wild in the wild, pure under the moon.

If we must have such nonsense, let it be  
the madness of seeds and tendrils, leaves  
and skeins of leaves, a crazed redemption  
from our impossible moralities, our pain,

from the divisive choice, conflicted right,  
intransigent wrong and inner weakness.  
Let us have back those faceless stones,  
those splintered logs in ash-wet glades,

pretending to own power, facile power  
of our alien fears, our dark imagination.  
Better still none. Keep walking, friend,  
scatter the pollen, speak with the birds.

Vanish softly through the gates of grass,  
with never a look behind, cross the way,  
a moment gone, into the mindful mindless.  
Take me with you, where silent people trod.

## The Name Rose

The moon rose,  
a thing of truth and silence,  
and not the sigh of substance  
whose name evokes the space light

by which we are dissected,  
so far from Earth and fragile.  
The wind blew,  
protesting its innocence and honour,

blew clouds above a seascape,  
so far from Earth and sighing  
but not the sigh of substance,  
the wind blew,

in mind there,  
where forms encode their meaning,  
not dust and rock and glimmer  
of alien suns, not substance

but moons of those millennia,  
the human,  
bright moons, bright with inner tremor  
of the engendering seasons,

star-watching years, the slowly  
drifting years of patience  
while winds rose,  
while time blew over landscapes,

while streams ran in the canyons,  
ran crying for  
the moon-rose  
the thing of light and silence.

## No Use Peering Back

The bright-eyed creature on the wall,  
watched me. It flickered across  
the drying path. A bird in the pine  
stuttered in pure alarm, the air  
was half warm with spring, part  
filled with that chill of winter  
that's cool on the eye and mind.  
The wind in the hollow churned a leaf,  
the bright-eyed creature, long and lithe  
rippled its tawny fur a little, gazed  
at the something strange, the alien eye,  
slipped behind stone, and vanished.

No use peering after what's left behind  
and irrecoverable, the lost relationship  
or one that never could find a meaning  
being so much other. We cannot find  
a correlative for mind, except in mind  
gone past and beyond that bright face,  
except in an individual, specific mind,  
my mind, your mind, no longer natural  
but born of the artefact, a high old culture.  
No bright-eyed creature will linger to peer  
at its obscure future, there's death or nurture  
hanging on its stride, its marvellous grace.

## The People

They too have lived in a mist but there's  
no fulfilment there.

They too have confused identity, proved  
uncertain of their vagueness,

almost felt a nostalgia round an absence  
for a fog of dying stars.

They too have long seen through the deceit  
of speech and symbols,

words found being never their author,  
and never the audience.

They too have wished to vanish into silence,  
into the haze of their desire.

They too are neither reality nor illusion,  
but the unreal mingling of the two.

They too are best in the moment, in the sweet  
time of forgetfulness,

stunned by the beauty, bared by truth,  
or scorched it seems by love.

## A Trace

I'll leave you a trace: to be  
is not to be realisable,  
the self of my self is not  
what it did but what it knew.

I'll leave you a thought,  
which is not unless you  
can re-think it: who we  
are not is who we were.

I'll wish you a peace  
of no one's making,  
it's face to face alone  
with whatever happens,

clothed or unclothed  
it doesn't matter, only  
don't assume where  
you come from and go.

I'll leave you to imagine  
several different futures  
in none of which you exist  
but all your own.

## The Two Of Them

They spent many centuries  
staring at the sea and sky,  
then many centuries gazing  
at the ideas in their minds,

till their mountains and rivers  
became neither, became other,  
since they could never return  
to simply sea, and simply sky.

They had to learn to be neither,  
not the gazed on nor the gazer,  
they had to learn to be process,  
whose content is its outcome,

whose meaning is its passing,  
they had to be mind and suffer  
convinced that a world exists,  
convinced they are in world,

and the world inside the mind  
and both like lovers in love  
unable to find themselves  
except by finding the other.

## The Unexpected

They thought they had achieved  
something, by all this existing.  
Certainly it's more complex,  
whatever we think we're doing,

but perhaps are simply caught  
between living without intent,  
and breathing with excess purpose  
between the child and the god,

if that's what you think a god is,  
a figment of ultimate movement  
towards an inscrutable outcome,  
or perhaps your god is a child.

Living the way they learned to  
seemed to deny them meaning,  
caught between pain and joy  
and the tedium of belonging:

it's a question where it leads to,  
if it goes anywhere at all.  
They certainly carved forms  
gave names and tempted fate.

They certainly travelled space  
to find their ghost selves again,  
under stars that are always-on  
they certainly saw no sunsets.

Let us think of them as sighing  
in the green winds of morning  
confessing time's an aesthetic  
and the transience an eternal,

in the morning in the mind,  
despite the contradictions.  
Let us think of ourselves  
as them, still the unexpected.

## A Message To The Immortals

Don't seize the day now, Postumus, Postumus,  
it's not what you thought it,  
the moment is not  
both the thing you can live  
and the thing you can see.

Take care of yourself, and take care  
of your future, plan  
and consider, be the voyeur  
of whatever you dream of,  
so be here and be there.

It's true that the darkness and Lethe are waiting,  
though we live as immortals  
each moment we die,  
in the pain of each memory,  
the hurt of each love lost,

not hurts of the body but pains of the mind.  
Sensation, dear Postumus,  
cheats and deceives us,  
though thought's not much better  
it's yours and its mine.

So don't seize the day, make light of your purpose,  
give the poor universe values and names,  
your being is free despite its conception,  
your mind is your universe  
strange as it seems.

## The Fragments

They conceive of themselves  
as objects on a floor,  
the self is the collective,  
a skittering of perceptions.

They talk to themselves  
as though they were one  
among many of themselves  
(it's where you place the comma)

and each casts a shadow  
of itself into the abyss,  
which as we know is filled  
with little energies vibrating

or some such mode of being.  
They think of themselves  
as in love with themselves,  
translating every tongue every instant,

creating worlds unlike themselves  
as maybe, though all of them are  
someone remarkably like them,  
and none are independently real.

They communicate in mental whispers,  
so discreet each one has a colour  
and a flavour (the senses interchange)  
they communicate their longing,

to be one, though disunited, not as  
a shattered semblance of the music  
but as a single phrase, so transcendent  
it will no longer matter who they are.

## Soliloquy Of The Auto-Pilot

Out of the many selves time forges one,  
the self we never saw, the one rushed past  
in gazing from the train, or speaking softly  
to someone else there that we never knew.

Out of the many selves we thought we saw,  
one is our (fractured) image of ourselves,  
which shifts according to the time of the day,  
the mood, the company, the inner language.

Out of the many purposes inherited, the one  
we forge is the one we never dreamed of,  
the one we never saw in the dark mirror  
lit like a pursuer, but always far ahead.

The stars we aim towards are not the ones  
we found in the telescopes. They remain  
the illusions, never to be orbited, as we  
should never go back to the place we lost,

simply because it is. This is our planet,  
the mind in its glittering whirlpool bare  
of atmosphere, showing us its unknown  
contours rarely, should we forget ourselves.

## Bluish Limestone

Ambiguity is of poetry's essence. Not  
only those ambiguities of language

but those complexities of our response  
to things, where we are never wholly

right or wrong however pure our values.  
Love compromises: it compromised us.

Where the wildflowers are beginning,  
as soon as we enter, paradise is lost.

We trail the ghosts of ourselves behind us.  
Depth is in surface, surface is the essence.

What are the thoughts of wild creatures  
in their own language? Self-perpetuating,

now, sagebrush, bared bluish moonlit  
limestone, austere and gently glowing,

eludes our interference, this the unplanned  
order, deeper, grander, freed from time.

Every green stalk, stem, pebble equals us  
in Being, equals our individual existence.

We sense that truth internally, we feel  
the extreme presence of the naked world.

## On The Dark Rock

Here is nature in the silence  
waiting for us to pass.  
A sweet diversity, the ant  
crawls by, the leopard yawns.

And our guilt too meaningless  
when we have gone.  
The blue sky blue,  
still, the green hills quiet.

A fantasy of purpose is not  
the immense world of the sea  
thrashing its sand and stone  
and bones, its fishy dead.

We were at best mediocre  
as a species, there were better,  
the small wrens for example,  
with their delicate music.

And yet the golden sun, my  
moon at midnight's raven-cry  
or the river that flashed silver,  
and the intricacies of our being,

they were something. It was  
something, all the spectacular.  
There a simplicity, a loveliness  
we might vanish into, not this.

## Between The Poles

Why should the sun's anger  
be your own.

Why should you take upon  
yourself corruption?

Humanity for all its cleverness  
is trapped,  
in the dark of its own making  
the self-born sadness.

In the pure change nothing changes:  
identity alters, true,  
but the wave breaks  
through a barrel-glare greenness

and the slow foam hisses raw  
bubbling and sweet  
along the shore,  
to melt across our thoughts.

The high hawk sinks  
but the mountain waits,  
beyond your anger  
beyond your pain.

Our pride and our humility  
are both the lances  
of the spirit, whether  
envying stone or star.

Why should the moon's  
quiet not be your own?  
Why should you not  
out-distance the unborn?

## What Might Be Told Of Us

No one was witness to our drowning,  
only our soft wake, rippling, sounding,  
telling where we had found the night  
beating metallic stars to silvered light,  
found in the green depths our meaning.

Civilisation is what survives our culture,  
it is the return towards the primal nurture,  
the rill in the mind that drives on thought,  
what we have learned not what was taught,  
fires of the past reborn in volcanic futures.

No one was witness to your beauty, not  
in the sense of the inward, subtle, caught  
for a moment, poised as flesh and dream,  
beyond the bitter glissade of the stream,  
where against the beating tide we fought.

No one could see us, as we slipped away,  
undone by life's music or its after-play.  
Diving to pale stone on the wavering bed,  
touching the fickle gleam above the head,  
what might be told of us no one could say.

## **A Peaceful View**

Only your values matter, not the rest,  
out of which flow your actions,  
whether a deep respect for wilderness,  
or a devotion to the quiet but free,  
concealed behind the outer system.

Only what forms the mind is you alone,  
everything outer is how you choose  
to expose yourself to a burning other,  
allow the night to enter and the sun,  
endure a drowning and a resurrection.

Only our values matter, not the rest,  
not the planets we knew, the galaxies,  
the poisoned stars, the paradisial few,  
the molten seas shining on lava shores,  
the cloudless, the clouded and the blue.

Only our values matter, yours and mine  
they involve a deeper nature, of the true  
silence without the human, and again,  
praise the gentleness within humanity,  
the untrammelled life, a peaceful view.

## **The Real River Run**

Nothing in nature lies between us,  
plunge your hand in the deep surface,  
glimmer of light is glimmer of mind.

Translucent creatures shimmer there,  
or float in the air, or dance on leaves,  
and we are nothing higher or greater.

Don't be deceived by shining words,  
by sweet seducers straining at spirit.  
There is only one, true illumination.

Nothing exceeds the being here, no  
otherworld where the body wavers,  
or brains without an eye perceive.

Nothing in Nature hides you from me,  
or I from you: now ripple the surface,  
watch the real refute all concealment.

Green weeds like glass, bold fish run  
through an icy water under our hands,  
and where we end is where we began.

Nothing in Nature now between us,  
the creature and its Earth complete,  
and our sole paradise under our feet.

## Desert At Twilight

After the catastrophe, with Earth gone  
we were adrift on the infinite darkness.

Like the dark pike we swam in shadow  
filled with distance, like craft in the sky

relinquished visible trails, far from home,  
so visitors, therefore exiles, hardly guests.

There were quiet landings, empty deserts.  
It was good to repeat the wilderness again,

without the error, and no indigenous tribes,  
never environmentally hostile ever again.

We pined for the creatures. We were life,  
the sole life, the water merely pure crystal,

the rock all kinds of sorry igneous torment.  
We would have given anything for a tree,

and not the ones we brought, but wild groves  
below limestone crags, sweetened with birds.

After the catastrophe, past the violence, there  
was a reckoning, the too-late comprehension.

Yes, we were gloriously free in our chains,  
bringers of civilisation to the glowing void.

Yet language, habit, drew from us nostalgia,  
for that mad planet, for its gone imaginings,

which now were ours. The infinite beckoned,  
beautiful with light. A tenderness burgeoned

towards all the un-redeeming, pitiful universe  
beyond the glass, for all of its inability to bear.

What would we not give now for the flowers?

## Little Walking Poem

I took a path that climbed and climbed,  
following the light beyond my head,  
to reach a summit of shale and rock,  
high over the valley that shone below.

I took the path, and gathered a breath,  
gazing at cloud, and grass, and blue  
distances where things might be true,  
or not as false as the mind would have.

I took the trail no one else would see,  
the trail that was there for myself alone,  
no pre-determined route through a map,  
but determined within me nevertheless.

I took the trail that can never run back,  
I took a path up there towards the sun,  
higher perhaps than I might have gone,  
and found and lost myself there at last.

## Seeding The Stars

Sharing the guilt for the innocents,  
we must learn that. None of us pure,  
all part of the cowardly collective,  
and its desire to hold, to gain, to be.

Guilt of the whole society, the species,  
but not an individual guilt of the self:  
it walks in paradise and is un-darkened,  
following the deeper ways in silence.

We must separate self from the Earth.  
I am not responsible for every other,  
nor is there primal sin, though evil still  
exists in dark flaws of mind and body.

There is my pure self, Blake saw, rising,  
though to a godless heaven, and then  
there's my persona, my involvement  
wished and unwished for in the world.

We can neither boast of innocence, nor  
condemn ourselves for love and truth  
and beauty. Ours is the middle way,  
the compromised, seeding the stars.

## Beyond The Wall

Deep down the real the red fox goes,  
dark thought in the blood, a tremor  
in leaves, while the far owl deceives  
with one dark hoot's uncertainties.

They are the denizens of night, and I  
no more in the light than an alien  
passer-by, for whom nature's sealed,  
a distant dream; I in another scheme.

No you can't tear belonging from life,  
though you can pretend, with subtlety,  
that Nature and you interpenetrate,  
as if description and word were being,

and not the music that Orpheus plays,  
for one that follows and must turn back,  
though he sings otherwise, and dreams  
of trailing the light, those dying streams.

Soft shadow of owl from a gasp of trees,  
sighs over the ground of my existence,  
pounces on something dark and small,  
some fragment of tissue, nerve and bone.

The cry of the night is never our cry,  
the human never the non-human call.  
Nature is beauty beyond the wall.  
We are the midnight ghosts that pass.

## There Sing I

Don't be precious in your speech,  
we are not some greater beings  
or let your gods in by the back door  
unable to declare their presence,  
or reconcile their non-existence.

Don't let the gold light sift and settle  
over the substance of your thought,  
exercise all you learned or taught,  
grasp the golden branch's metal,  
plough the dead under as you ought.

Don't seek for fame, an audience,  
they are not the leaves of laurel  
Petrarch wound about his Laura,  
though he thought so, rather be  
time's secret lover in eternity.

Don't look for burial with the dead,  
whose words are cut along the stone,  
be ash with Earth, be ghost of bone,  
go back to where the species played  
in darker depths of grass-green blade.

Don't compromise, don't speak the lie,  
look life and death square in the eye,  
with the moons and starlight blown  
make the unspeaking dark your own,  
cry those black spaces – there sing I.

## It Will Take

It will take  
a mountain, desert, sea  
to love you,  
a space of light,  
a magnitude of time.

It will take  
a planet, and a star  
to love you,  
a tract of ground  
to enter in and find.

It will take  
a sigh of winds, a roar,  
to love you,  
a hurricane of leaves  
an arc of pines.

It will take  
volcanic flame, far fire,  
to love you,  
the smoke of twilight  
in our lost domain.

It will take  
the rivers and the streams  
to love you,  
the rippling shadows  
and the nascent gleam.

It will take,  
all Earth, a universe  
to love you,  
and another  
universe to say your name.

## Silent As the Grass

It dances on the eye of light the mind.  
That wintry heaviness is no destiny.  
The depth that seems is not the mystery,

All being is a surface, beauty gleams.  
Spontaneous the nameless indistinct,  
intentionless so void the solid emptiness.

At our weakest, life invades the veins,  
and thought in the abyss still transcends.  
Each moment is where time begins and ends.

The mirror that reflects but does not keep,  
in the simplicity of leaves, the cry of air:  
truth clothes us with the light that strips us bare.

Portentiousness is not the mountain's right,  
possessing no more being than the light,  
free as the breeze, and silent as the grass.

## Aware

On their planet, the mind turned inside-out,  
their thoughts are visible externally,  
with colours and display, anguish, joy  
may be inspected with their memories.

Communication is no more a problem  
than perception, individuality is etched  
in black, troubling but always capable  
of re-direction. There is no turning back.

To Earth long gone, they pay tribute,  
though find it astounding that minds  
hugged the dark. Theirs are apparent,  
each meaning and emotion has its corner,

its surface presentation: like minds see  
themselves reflected in eternity, why  
seek a vision that no one can share,  
rather they cherish the revealed, aware.

## Mind-Fish

The emerald water, purple waves, move  
in arcs and tremblings of agitation,  
alone in the darkneses mind-fish swim  
devoid of the human, passing to and fro  
flickerings of endless motion, the tide  
carrying its flotsam to a shoreless shore  
which is itself an uncertainty of place,  
where there is sound, but no word said,  
where there is flow but scarcely feeling,  
yet permanence still, sheer continuation,  
like pulsing stars that iterate on station,  
unaware of the language of their being.  
The shadows of the mind-fish in the glass  
of our present universe glide by with fins;  
silent the eyes that watch. They look deep  
and puzzle at weeds, tug at stones asleep.

## Precession

It is so delicate the sense of self in precession  
around the core of memories and meanings,  
the inner network of abstruse connection  
sifting the outer networks of perception.

It is fragile in its beauty and as yet innocent  
of action, it is the intricate ghost assaying  
the golden light and every moment weighing  
its options, forming every moment, eyeing

what it is to be. And then it is, in a world  
beyond its creation, self-sown, self-ordered;  
there, is compromised, and yet still shines  
outside that world, where our humanity goes

in slow orbit round a forgiving sun, a star  
that has no concept of our values, no desire  
to punish or forgive, but whose heat blesses  
more than spurious mercies of false religion.

The self is void, is always the process passing,  
its purposes figments of perilous imagination,  
in a world without intent, therefore emptiness,  
yet is all we have, and are, and must return to.

## Uncertainty

Entangled wave-forms pass and flow,  
collapse to correlation so, instantaneously.

Faster than light, yet causally, on every  
planet under its sun, uncertainty is done,

and certainty, elusive, the long-lost prize  
emerges, throws its star-dust in our eyes.

Uncertainty is sweeter, as I'm aware,  
never in one place, always here *and* there.

## **Beyond All This**

Long slopes of idle grasses.  
Silently I roam the mountain.  
Things here go about their business.  
White clouds linger here and blow.

What are these things we long for?  
Why is the dumb heart anxious?  
Beyond all this, wind and light stir.  
The grasses whisper, mind slows.

## Windblown

You can look in yourself for your Self,  
but the self in yourself is process, dark  
shift of the patterns tied in the neurons,  
the effecting of thought, and no object.

When I look in myself, the Self is gone,  
there only a vagueness of imageless light,  
and the green ticking clocks of sensation.  
'Show me this Mind then' the master said.

It is nowhere, like world, deep in the unreal,  
like a dancer realised only through dancing,  
like the poem, a statement, where the idea  
coalesces, beyond the imagery it conjures.

Look deep in yourself, in the ordinary mind  
and the human goes past you, boldly escaping  
into a freedom past all the genetics, past all  
of the learning and all of the turnings of life,

into our values, our meaning. In being we reside,  
nowhere else, in the outcomes, not the software  
or hardware. The Self is where this moment runs,  
off away with the windblown heart and the head.

## No Seductive Darkness

Why should I lie down with the violence  
of creatures, the violence I cannot accept?  
Am I one with the hawk or the mountain  
lion, with the rending and tearing of flesh?

There is nothing humane at the heart, no  
purpose at all at the centre of things, no  
meaning in being, free of intent, unless we  
set it there. We are the values, the kindness.

We are the brimming pool of compassion,  
that we learnt from the nurturing fullness,  
that we find strangely echoed in herbs, in  
the herds, in the tufts of wild blue grasses,

in the small loyalties, in the stillness, far  
from all power and desire, in the beauties,  
which are there, true, in the line the form  
of the predator, but not in its violence.

The spirit it is that shines, the secular mind  
that has learnt its sacredness at the well  
of the bright particular, and if not cased  
in dense plastic, the concrete and the steel,

further back then in the landscape of stone,  
in the sea, in the grass where we stumbled  
deep millennia, in the pastures of patience,  
the paths through the mountains, the trees.

The spirit it is that shines, and so questions  
the origins as then all the outcome, denies  
the genetics, and the rightness of violence  
once gone beyond the need, not to claim,

that is, any innocence, yet still to refrain.  
This is the gentlest of landscapes where I  
reflect, its intensity is its moonlit calling  
of inner dimensions. There is no return

to blind tooth and claw. For them there's  
no guilt, the dream-walkers by instinct,  
the leopard, the vulture, the timber wolf.  
Guilt is for those who foresee, innocence

for those who forbear. In the killing we  
share and our stained. In the kindness too  
we share and are blessed and redeemed,  
but not by empty religion, only in these

paths of the galaxies, ways of the axons  
that join mind to mind, and the gift we  
give to the darkness, a slow cultivation  
of fields where lives may forever be free

since even the human may be outgrown,  
though those to come under curious skies  
with their subtler thought may remember  
beauty was human too, though they exceed.

## Harvest-Mouse

Let even the skeleton like a tiny lizard  
seem golden.

In a caul of dried grass, the gold fur  
the dark liquid eyes.

Every creature should find its peace  
to die in.

Under the fern, or in the dark hedges  
by root or stone.

Like a harvest-mouse on a dandelion-head  
deep in white seed  
let life endearingly endure:  
thank bi-faced Nature, the cruel and sheltering.

A two-faced goddess hides in the green leaves,  
where nothing's divine,  
the wheat-fields are nodding goldenly quiet,  
but in salt-marsh, wetlands

too the small balls of light and life survive  
mocking our edifices,  
everyone eats them, stoats, foxes, blackbirds  
toads, food for eternity.

When we softly go down ashes under the trees,  
are protons gone back  
to the stars, pure dust under predatory feet,  
or a plaything for moons,

let us be as golden; yet, here now, in breath  
in the unprecedented  
unrepeatable time now, admire  
the clear burnished skeleton bright in the gold of the air.

## Now We Are Leaving

Now we are leaving, the planet seems  
sweeter, kinder,  
the contours clearer, the light fresher,  
a world more tender  
of moonlit stone.

In the vast scene where we are small,  
in the tremor of nature  
we too feel the tremor of things  
now Actaeon re-sees  
the goddess yet she,

it is, dies. Where we are going,  
out to the reaches  
of dark where the pulse of life's  
rare, we may value  
the stillness and sparseness,

leave fossil prints in dry earth,  
the sea and the rock.  
If we were the spoilers wherever  
we entered, now we  
might be the wiser.

The creatures too run in their sleep  
and imagine their lives,  
they too know the dreamtime of spirit,  
the shy and the quiet  
the peaceful like deer.

Now we are slowly departing  
we too must dream:  
it is never the world that exhausts  
us, rather we  
that exhaust the world.

## Inhuman Beauty

I went walking in the dandelion fields at dawn.  
An enviable quietness, like the tranquil sea.

The beauty is fragile as we are, the things exist  
but the beauty is only in mind, and only in all

the creatures of mind, which therefore includes us,  
as love survives after the end, but in memory only.

I went walking on paths on the limestone dome,  
its hills like calm waves slow in the early light,

progressing quietly, waves from the shining east,  
in which the slight dead lie and the slighter living.

Clarity and intensity, without violence, I love.  
Another play out there, acted, the one without us,

far in the deep field behind the gestures of stars,  
soft behind veils, the stones, shoals of that sea.

I went walking, in the dandelion fields at dawn.  
And the bright flowers went through my mind,

in that green basin of earthlight and the morning,  
as if a humane beauty glistened out of the world.

## In The Contrast

In the contrast is the beauty:  
between the clearly formed  
and what seems formless,  
between the great tree  
and the eroded stone,  
between the one white  
cloud and the blue sky.

In the contrast is the beauty:  
between the present  
and the only imagined,  
the path here of turf  
and the hill-meadows,  
the walls and woods  
far off, I'll never visit.

The delight is in the contrast:  
between the sunlight  
and the mayfly's wing,  
the apparent chaos  
and the sense of order,  
the unknown and the known,  
your mind and mine.

The delight is in the contrast:  
between the darkness  
and the stars,  
between the breakers  
and the shore,  
between the void  
and the loom of being.

## The Caves

No I don't need to know what they were doing in their caves, the soft shy peoples, whatever magic, religion, they thought they were making, or identity they were seeking, so also finding, whether they sang with those shining surfaces, or screeched with the creatures' calls, or gazed at the silence imagining new flowers, or traced their prints on time, and felt and created beauty, whether dreaming they etched the dreamtime, or mapped the features: springs, and the solitary trees, the lines of a ridge, or the watercourses.

But I hope they were happy, that they laughed more deeply than us, had more sensitive eyes, that they saw the future of power, and cunning, and were sad for us, more secure in their being, that they nursed their children, carved in bone, planted and nurtured, were kind in their giving, coped with the pain, were dazzled by moonlight, less racked by the need for a why, for a purpose, less intense in their questioning the intentionless; I hope they rang true, rare, complex as the birds, the fish, the insects, were clear-eyed, undeceived.

I too like the revelations of where we came from, but, as for their myths, let us leave all that, refrain, not ask about the bison, the figures that could be shamans, the reason for loops and dots and lines of graceful runners, dancers, leapers: a little peace for the dead, a little quietness here, just stand, look at that impossible beauty of lines untouched by art, their spontaneous delight in the conjuring or desire, that seamless flow between rock and hand and eye, that sigh of the ocean of being that we were born to, and have traduced, without meaning to, you and I.

## To The Reader

And ask of poetry what you ask of life,  
a fragment of beauty, a little harmony.

Don't ask what was asked of the Master  
returning, one Dogen, back from China:

'What did you learn there? What did you  
bring us?' – (Ask for peace and not things;

so he replied) 'I return with empty hands.  
And I learned? – Only a little tenderness.'

## Slow Hills

The ancient people lie down in their graves  
under these fields, so silent down in the soil,  
though not beneath tumuli or stone circles,  
not by the dolmens and barrows. They left  
their prints in raw earth, in layers of ground,  
ash or bone with their pottery shards, traces  
of fire on the rock, pulses of light in the dust.

They lie in their graves all over these hills,  
under the glittering bending fields of grass,  
under the sigh of cool air in the early sun,  
below the barns and walls and green roads,  
the tribes without written tongue. Gathered  
together the many lie hidden, free of their  
magic at last, of their gods and their codes.

Effort not power made this landscape. Pain  
and lightness, a labour of love. How gently  
they went down into the nothing beyond!  
And with the cry at the last, or with a sigh,  
the bitterness of unfulfilled joy, or the ache  
of their tenderness, no matter, now neither  
sleep nor un-sleep, nor restlessness or rest.

## **Nameless Fall**

It is heard by the diver bird and the wren,  
that crash of water. It is glass on a stone.

The cliffs go up to the tall sky, the air  
is iced with spray, small minds are clear.

At night splintering cliffs rattle and roar  
in the valley's throat, and creatures hear,

but no one else. Humanity is elsewhere,  
considering or wrecking: the only intent

here, that of survival, nurture and iteration,  
songs of a million years, in untiring purity.

## Un-benumbed

Sometimes you cannot feel yourself,  
but here you can, here you can sense  
a lifetime, or the dark after a lifetime,  
in the drift of the wind and cloud.

Limestone is bedrock here, fingers  
have lifted and carved, if you love  
stone you can feel its light glimmer,  
here, the heart in you burn with life.

Long edges, valleys, trees, above all  
trees, that allow long slopes to relent,  
and the specific starry configurations,  
and the flare of wildflowers, planets.

Sometimes you pass by the places we  
spoil, ones that harbour associations.  
Here there is no desire to ever pass by,  
you can even be foolish call it Eden.

The waves here are breakers of grass.  
The ocean has long gone, but left us  
these frozen tendrils, cusps of shells,  
on which, in the stone, Deneb shines.

This a graceful, a gentle country, no  
ghosts linger, not even of ancient  
dead who raised rocks, piled earth  
to declare the madness of presence.

Often you'll look and feel nothing,  
but here with skylarks and swallows  
high up or swooping low you can be  
the adult child, cloud light and water.

You can touch pure Self in the mind,  
the strange sway of the world, its fire  
and delicate ice, the something in us  
that refutes death by everything alive.

Here you can be what you love, know  
what was born from the brain beyond  
any intention, the self-made self-sown  
order of Earth, and its deep acceptance.

## Stone Age

I imagine them passing through the long grasses, alive over hills, the rare amongst all of the many, in ones or twos, or in small groups of all genders, the silent peoples, surrounded by starry creatures, by whose complexity of person they were amazed, shocked by wild beauty, else how could they have drawn the outlines of light on the billowing walls of the caves, in the rock-shelters? Or under the stars how else could they have raised up a standing stone?

I imagine them, perhaps falsely, in their tenderness, as if nurture was the ancient invention not violence, gazing down at the long slopes, or gathering there (tell me the dale!) where the wild-garlic flows down in foam of white flowers in a green wave of the sea, to startle, where the stony ravens croak on the cliffs, where wildflowers (orchis, cowslip, or water avens) border the paths above the bare stream, those clouds moving too quietly for me, in May, on a radiant blue.

They were no less clever than us, so no less awake if we are awake, nor do they dream of what we are as we dream of them. The wanderers without aim, whose sense was survival, careless of destination, as long as it brought them where might be content, listening to great waves, or lying down under hills etched on the dark, with those high crowns of stars. Why long to go back? It's a madness. Here we are with our civilisation protecting us from the flames.

Why long for the cleansing to sweep away the most of what we have done? Why envy the primitive? Gauguin was no less unhappy, Rimbaud, in the end, all value for us being within, deep in the human heart and not in the circumstances of our being. And yet, there's that beauty, that quiet of long sweet spaces of echoing night sky, the range of feelings all there in those ghostly faces that intimate we will never go further than they did in friendship or tenderness.

## A Little Courage

You must understand the bravery of art  
to live it. It's an easy courage  
requires no great sacrifice, rather  
it's a conquest of difficulty, reticence.

The making is all in the acceptance  
of truth, is in the creation  
not of feeling which is easy, rather  
the consequence of feeling which is not.

The thinking through is what demands  
the unordinary. What moves  
us all is deep in the cells, and not  
the truth which is hard to cling to.

Still, let us be brave, in the face  
of our loneliness, our fears.  
To those who cease to invent ghosts,  
or demons, a lack of gods will be kind.

## Impure

The ocean stirs with a blinding brightness,  
great breakers breathe foam, like volcanoes  
spiralling mist in the air, ozone over stones,  
shatter, and take with them half of the shore,  
churn, smooth the pebbles, scouring the sand,  
purify, as the dark river its sculpted cataracts,  
wash the granite with salt, defying gravity  
so embracing it, bring shell litter, carapace,  
bone of the cuttlefish, shape life with death.

The shoulders of headlands shrug off the dawn.  
Bleak islands, reef and rock sing like the wires,  
howl with direction, a wind in the roads makes  
light of the wave-fronts, piles up our memories.  
Something under our civilisation rears awhile,  
pays homage without mind, laughs in our face.  
But the jetties survive and the cliff-wet houses,  
and the boats ride over, their anchors holding,  
while the ocean's purity is no better than mine.

We will not be saved by the ancient Earth, we  
can only cast off into that ocean of star-ways,  
into the seas between galaxies, into the dark,  
where our fears are magnified, our securities  
less than our skeletons under the high waters.  
It will need a greater scouring than this our  
planet, it will need our absence, the brine  
and dirt of neglect, the grinding down of our  
detritus, the freedom of spiny creatures, dark

insects, violent predators, the desperate herds.  
Then with the cities gone, the grass and trees  
grown over the sills and shimmers, the wild,  
in its deep unpleasantness, as well as for us  
its non-human beauty, reclaiming our space  
and without possession, held without power  
or authority, might return to its beginning,  
in some few million years. The valueless  
glimmer of landscape churning in sun-fire.

Far out we will be singing of other worlds,  
and our lost home, with daring sentiment.  
We will be colonising the impure universe,  
with impure thoughts of conquest, disguise.  
So let me go down again to the sea-caves,  
clear for a moment of all but nature's spoil,  
to watch the great waves collapse in spume,  
the granite quiver, the sea-birds cry, Earth  
roll with its Moon, and disabuse my mind.

## What Means For a Plant

A heron beats down-river, sharp keel in the air.  
The night so calm the water makes tiny sounds  
and small glimmers, small thoughts in the eye,  
which does indeed think before we do, forms  
flare in its shadows, the heron's wings creak,  
while fireflies over the surface dart and flicker.

Across a dying sun the black shapes of birds  
carve flight with a flash of light, are mirrors  
that absorb and cannot reflect. The tremors  
lap gently at the shore, reeds in this hush  
are blind, vegetable nature is simply blind  
but senses in subtle ways, non-consciously,

so that, in our projection of meaning, perhaps  
we are not alone, that even night, water, air  
means for a plant, while a whole cosmos  
moves through the stillnesses for a heron,  
and makes our intelligence a lesser thing,  
an equal thing, with the dumbest life-forms.

There are things we are taught not to say,  
(not overtly, by implication) concerning how  
inadequate our performance, limited our gifts,  
so it's good to be honest with the heron, with  
the reeds, below a moon ever more beautiful,  
confess the longing, the reaching-out, the pain.

## After The Crossing

We treasure those who are like us but unlike us.  
We consider their ways and try to comprehend.

That lightness where we are heavy, that desire  
for what never interested the lonelier intellect,

their meadow whilst we build a tower, their fine  
sliver of light on the shore where we are darkness.

We may forget them, once over the Styx, but then  
we'll forget ourselves also, and what will be there,

in that fragment of spirit without a sense of knowing,  
the innocence of a child or some blankness of stare,

(pure fancy this) among the black lakes and trees,  
where the swallows fly and ribbons hang, where

the shades flicker and the waters are time and fate?  
More likely we will flare with light of recognition.

The same likeness unlike will cause the like flow  
of affection for the arabesques of pure difference.

We will find the same amusement in grim Charon,  
trail hands in the night-dark flow, but never be sure

if the one we see who is other is part of ourselves,  
or something alien perhaps, our self in antithesis,

yet uncannily similar like particle and anti-particle,  
some things reversed, not all, and obvious in a way,

(pure fancy this) but our eyes will weep when we  
see them, that is certainly in the nature of things,

and the charge between us will be greater than all  
the cries of nature, its beauty, the vast non-human.

## Why Care?

Why care so much whether we survive or no,  
(because we are human?) if the limestone cliff  
endures with its clumps of grass and flowers,  
not knowing of the tumuli over the crest there,  
if the river continues to flow, or becomes lake,  
or vanishes and is raised towards the starlight?

Why concentrate so hard on conserving those  
vistas and slopes that we love (because they  
carry our beauty, or the vision we conceived?)  
if the world beyond the human gleams, shines,  
flickers in insect life that can survive fission,  
or sways and gasps in the salt-water oceans?

Why weep if the billions vanish in quake or  
storm, if a virus sweeps through the mass of us,  
if war, or famine wash the dark cities away,  
why cry (because we are something more than  
intent, intensity, more than possession, joy?)  
if the white breakers still caress the islands,

the layers of stone laid down as life began,  
and the turtles and crabs crawl over sand,  
and the tiny shrimps and anemones wave  
tendrils in the tide-pool's brine and pebbles.  
So long as the primroses flame in spring air,  
and the windhovers call, and the curlews.

There is nothing to disappoint, and yet we  
are fearful of forever disappointing ourselves.  
There are no secrets, all the depth is surface,  
yet we look for a mystery in the stars, stones.  
Why should we care if Earth flares a moment  
in silence, and then falls aching into the sun?

If the galaxies survive, if on a distant planet  
other forms than ours achieve our thinking  
where other cliffs, inhuman cliffs, rise grey  
over sunlit ocean, and the wild bay flowers,  
not quite as ours, but near enough to savour  
its reflective green, as it mirrors other dawns.

## Alien And Alien

If the angel was the extreme of everything  
then it would possess senses so sensitive  
it could do nothing all day but scream.

There are no angels on the planets here.  
The stars out there which form different  
constellations to yours control no lives.

If the angel was the human perfected, then  
it would communicate silently like night,  
and be drowned in every other's thought.

There are no angels here, we commune  
fitfully, like you, and preserve the Self  
in a web of process much like your own.

If the angel was the sublime love and beauty,  
somehow incarnate, yet bodiless, seeing  
through the universe transparently, as we

would like to see, then it would see darkness,  
compassionate but powerless to intervene,  
like us, and so be nothing more than we are,

an idea of the good, struggling with action,  
a flare of identity, compromised by being,  
a shadow, as you are shadows of ourselves.

## The People

See how they went soft through the grasses.  
Yes I believe them more beautiful than I.

Their quick intelligence in earth or starlight  
keener, their knowledge of all this closer.

See how they carried the child, how they  
warmed the caves with tenderness and life.

Who cares what gods or power they thought  
spread the sky, and lit the moon, and roared

at night from the passes in the mountains,  
and inspired the creatures, their green eyes?

See how they moved silently in the morning,  
like a breeze in the dust, a pattern in the air.

See how they move inside us, almost are us,  
except we have to delve deeper to find them.

Dancing down the fields of light they passed.  
We have lost what they carefully left behind.

Not the practice: the dreaming, the respect.  
The sense of the fineness of inhuman nature,

the sense of the inter-penetration of things  
of into one another out of a self-same root.

There's irony. The animalistic religions,  
the anthropomorphic, drew them nearer

to that truth which is ours, how there's no  
difference between it all, only the forms.

So we might see the quick mind of the hare  
as of the same order of beauty as our own,

though beauty is ours, or is it wholly ours,  
or is there a dynamic in beauty of out there?

I see them in dream and waking, passing by,  
the flickering fires, their limited possessions,

the cries to the night skies, the compassion  
for, identity with, the creatures, the knowing

the details of every life, not just their own,  
and I wonder where that powerless power

has gone to, or why the image is so potent,  
we ache for them, we long for what we deny.

## Weep And Be Silent

This moment now never  
becomes the moment gone.

The moment gone is at best  
a memory, enshrined in mind,

the shadow of place, or word  
or vagueness hard to recapture,

a pain or delight. This moment's  
not even this moment which is

already vanishing into the next  
re-configuration of all the world.

This moment now is where you  
think you are. This moment now

is not what you will remember  
or exist in, though it you might

exist for. This now is not even  
a moment, it is the raw universe

before which you hover naked,  
if at peace far too complacent,

and if anxious, you'd be wise  
to find a way to make peace.

We are involved. There is no high  
moral ground. So don't pretend.

I caught us hunting, roaring through  
space, consuming, speaking ecology

or conservation, making a living.  
The moment is where we are living,

that never becomes the past. The past  
is what we construct from our dreams,

like my thoughts of the silent peoples, dark  
on a dark horizon, and myself still asking

what is noble in killing the creatures,  
while claiming to fear, respect them,

(though I love the thought of those  
peoples, the ones who pass like shadows)

why should we think tenderness then  
greater than tenderness now, or beauty

deeper then, when only the now is now,  
and the future and past of the dead one

with their now and the silence, and what  
lasts of what we loved is what we love.

## Only One Story Left

Eventually I begin to see the history  
as beautiful in itself, all the long way  
back to our origins, and likewise all  
the creatures we travelled along with,

which did not have to be themselves  
but are: the serious light-spun ones  
whose instincts guide them slowly  
through a maze marvellous as mine.

The ages of heat and stone, of water,  
the ages of grasslands, cliffs and air,  
the darker ages, the starlit millennia,  
beside which our time is pitiful, small.

I see now that science too was in part  
a way to assuage our dread curiosity,  
and, despite its errors of application,  
a way for us into the beauty we saw

which is hard to understand, except,  
in some Darwinian sense, as asset,  
a way to reconcile mind to transience,  
a way to bear this terrible evanescence,

this walking forward into the passing,  
which is also joy, to be free as the air,  
ungraspable like the mountain, elusive  
as running stream, silent, intentionless.

Eventually (should I live long enough) I  
might begin to see it as the only beauty,  
the long way back, the getting to here,  
the transformed Earths of our memory.

## **By The Fire**

Sparks from the branches,  
burning, for no personal profit.

The wind in the trees, turning  
the leaves, for no personal profit.

Water coiled, without twisted  
thought, for no personal profit.

This Earth not for sale, a star  
without fear, for no personal profit.

And you here, and what we feel  
here, are not for personal profit.

## The Wildflower And The Wild Hare

The wildflower and the wild hare.  
I wish I could see their detail better,  
but was never too good at the fine points  
of existence, the pale cleft and the grain.

I have seen the dance though, in the light,  
over the dew, in the long soft grasses,  
watching what Han Shan pondered on,  
endless hills, unspoilt bare horizons.

And have loved. No more or less indeed  
than the first of peoples in the first age,  
before we wandered out of the light  
into these delicate shadows vaguely,

but still enough to have been and know  
life as a strangeness mind puzzles over  
as though the question set, though there  
was never a question whispered in the air.

Simply the wildflower and the wild hare.

## Sibylline Leaves

Past the future which does not look too sure  
(disrupted Earth, plagues, wars, famine, alien  
process, machinery uncanny, the wild pursuit  
of who knows what from curiosity, greed, so  
no different than the last four thousand years,  
except in scale) past that, lies the distant planet.

It has green hills, two suns, three moons, light  
softer than here and kinder, but lacking maybe  
the astringency, the sour-sweetnesses of home.  
The population is small, the government only  
ourselves, who cooperate in simple easy ways,  
handing down no scriptures and following none.

It is against the laws, if we had any, to believe,  
to follow, to own. Take what you need, give  
what you have, science has solved the problems  
of resources (energy, food, anything you desire)  
though cannot do what indeed is not in its power,  
and supply the meaning, its passion, or the love,

which live in minds, albeit of science's making  
(the minds I mean, not like these present minds)  
In our utopias of the future we sit and dream  
perversely of those same non-utopian landscapes,  
where small groups just like us strayed in the grass  
and tried for small content and greater knowledge.

We have given up on knowledge, though of course  
we practice all the arts and crafts, do the field-work,  
to keep from boredom, and still cherish laughter,  
slightly defiant (the universe irritatingly pointless)  
write poems, and sit in foolish meditation, there  
being nothing to gain from that but long persistence.

## Unsafe waters

Seagull shines through the fog, breaks into sun,  
a shattering of feathers over a blackness of rock,  
screams in its hatred, joy, or its inner fireworks,  
shreds the damp clinging air, shoots over space,  
and is an image to me of the mad mind, diving  
in and out of the interstices of the brave planet,  
that unafraid goes ellipsing, soaring on nothing,  
or of the planet itself, a great bird un-affirming,  
but by mere presence affirming Being in mind.

Seal shines on the shore as small boats creep  
silently through the white glare and shadows,  
then takes off, flops to the salt-ways, slithers  
loosed and free now into the blue-green flow,  
and is an image for me of the strong heart flung  
out of the safety I love, into the unsafe waters,  
that unafraid goes diving, rolling, squirming  
or of those seas themselves, power unmeaning  
careless of where it ends in that bare gliding.

## What We Keep

We found it hard to let go  
of the peace before technology  
of our original being,  
nature undisturbed,  
the spaces of seeing.

We found it hard to let go  
of the flesh we inherited  
and the beauty we  
created, the gardens  
of sweetly carved stone.

We found it hard, hard to let go  
of those first lasting assumptions  
ideas of external purpose  
the meaning of trees  
the company of creatures.

We found it hard to let go  
of everything that was Earth,  
bar the memories of our species,  
and the remnants we kept,  
the notes and the images.

## Snow On Hills

The snow on hills  
the beauty of the trees.  
Far off the city  
blinking and trailing  
banners of smoky  
light in the air.

The snow on pines,  
the juniper fragrance.  
Far off the road  
snaking, climbing  
cutting canyons  
breaking wave.

The snow inside us,  
the heart calmer.  
Far off the dark cloud  
the power lines  
the unheard sounds  
the creatures

who know better  
go secretly  
go silent  
the snow inside them  
the trees the hills  
the planet.

## Below The How

The track I remember passed,  
as it fell down from the mountain,  
a bay out of the cliff,  
a ripple of stone  
a stand of trees  
a stream of water,  
the whole thing  
light and dark,  
shadow and substance.

Lots of creatures lie here  
under the ground, or were eaten  
and became the ground;  
it feels a good place  
to be, a quiet place,  
fine for every time  
and every season,  
the seasons of the mind  
or of the planet.

## The Charge

Explain then, if we were not  
creatures of nature  
why the naked beauty  
seems to us to lie  
in natural things,  
those limestone reefs  
poking through grass,  
with an un-marred stretch of vetch  
and speedwell,  
lining the trail.

These things have neither  
patience nor impatience,  
they are not waiting;  
and what we carry  
with us is just  
this delicate precise  
charge of the living  
world, this electric fineness,  
which is frail, perishable,  
unique among the billions.

## If You Don't See

If you don't feel, the images,  
indeed are lifeless, flat,  
trite and meaningless,  
if you don't feel, the woods,  
the hills, the curious clouds,  
have nothing in them,  
as we as minds are nothing  
with nothing in them.

But why condemn? Our species  
is not the be all and end all.  
The crows go to  
and fro, overhead,  
over the valleys of my heart  
the soft curving green slopes,  
over the ash and lime,  
over the obvious, miraculous.

If we could be beautiful, we  
would look like this, original  
nature, strange like  
the skin of your hand,  
but flowing, singing, shining:  
straight fact, Being, shared,  
with its own rarity, nobility,  
a darkness if you don't see.

## The Difficulty

Then, I love these things  
more than people, not  
alongside people, more  
than the species, not even  
as one of the many species,  
and there is my guilt.

Since I prefer the wind,  
the wave-washed silence,  
the mist-filled valley east,  
the burning skyline west,  
more than all cities, more  
than the greatest art, more

than whatever will be next,  
(but with no wish for the wild  
rather wishing it untouched,  
space where no one goes, no  
one, and I included) prefer  
the many-times cultivated

the green hills of this home,  
the cared for and the tended,  
where in its crevices the wild  
lingers, is therefore pristine,  
the single flower as pure at  
the source as the wilderness.

Then I prefer the dark clear  
stretches of my Self, a vision  
deep as the smoking dome  
of sky, fierce with the sole  
dignity of this mind alone,  
my fault-line there, my error.

## At Last

If this is the last, then let us love on to the last,  
and express the sense of things, the immanence,  
without condemnation of whoever lost the way.

If this is the place we end, let it be perfect ending,  
a human ending, not in the magnificence of dark  
inhuman nature, or the complacency of happiness,

since in our way we are happy, happy to have seen,  
to have been, to have felt the fire, and though we  
could not be one of the ones who are so adjusted

they only have to breathe with the flow to conquer,  
we were one with the light that struggles at dawn  
to cross the grass and settle at length on the walls.

We could be stone in the flow, or reed in the water,  
be something blindly poking through ice and snow,  
one last leaf on the stem, a ragged bird on the briar.

And if this is the last then let us live on to the last,  
be still the alien species never quite at home here,  
and be content at the last, in our primal discontent.

## Cattle And Sheep

Sheep and cattle  
in green fields  
standing or lying  
stare you straight in the eye  
cough and consider  
old walls cold, the evening wind.

Standing in waves of grass  
the old walls shelter  
insects, mice, birds;  
a stonechat bobs,  
in the eye of the mind  
the sun lowers.

Stone after stone fallen  
lichened, bare  
grey limestone, millions  
of years from shore,  
makes pale walls  
makes angled edges.

Cattle and sheep  
treading waves  
snort and bow  
to eat the grasses,  
the scattered flowers,  
reflected suns.

## Riding The Falling Wave

It is hard to understand, I know,  
but it is the nothingness  
brings freedom.

All the electric past that clings  
to the mind, temporarily  
assuaged, the pain

quivering there, the sadness,  
anything extraneous you  
wish to shed,

that hollow ache at the centre  
that never leaves you,  
that alien feeling

of never having belonged  
to this world, to this  
Earth, that's fine.

It is the knowledge that below  
the forms, all is one,  
the same flicker and flow,

like the flicker and flow of the gulls  
brown-winged, white-bellied,  
over the fresh-mown fields.

It is the feeling that what will never  
return (the exact joy or shame,  
the irritation, endless, with self)

will fold itself away, become empty,  
as time past is empty as time  
future, you are here and now

and nowhere else. It is the feeling  
that nothing can touch  
the memory of the joy or of the pain.

It is the knowing we can go whenever  
we choose, though deciding  
not to choose, that

is freedom. Nothing of this is real,  
the real is within, oscillating,  
a skein of self in a swirl of process,

and the sadness matters, and the pain  
but only in the freedom,  
the forms we cherish

because we are of that nature, this nature,  
the whole madness of intent  
born to the intentionless,

which is therefore empty: the purposeless  
is empty, we are full,  
of the making and recalling,

a madness of chasing, longing, Odysseus  
the hero, always getting back  
or getting on, sleek and cunning

but not like us, trembling with doubt,  
riding the falling wave,  
learning to love a bright emptiness.

## Threnody

Earth went by  
in the black light,  
in our eyes  
and was gone  
falling among stars  
into and under stars.

Earth we gave away,  
too wild for us,  
too rich,  
too damaged  
a planet unmeant  
for us, and no design.

Earth melted blue  
into the far reaches,  
delicate, fragile,  
known the contours  
vanishing, with us,  
into the far spaces

Earth we lost,  
Earth we cared for  
so little, so much,  
we found it hard  
to feel the true delight,  
to find the hurt, to say.

Earth the unique place  
of our beginning,  
drifting, forsaken,  
forlorn, forgone, forever,  
over all horizons  
beyond our living sun.

## Cerinthus

And all in the mind, the light  
aquamarine, sapphire blue,

wind in the mountains pure  
again this year, eyes still clear

nothing has changed, world  
as intentionless, oh, is solid,

or as fragile as a thought, is  
beautiful as a certain thought,

that wards off doubt, or fear,  
Cerinthus, every fear,

and may last our time,  
and a little longer, wind

in the distant trees, soft rain,  
the mountain's voice

the quiet, singing.

## **Accident**

The bird of being and of light  
flew towards us through the night:

stirred the dark leaves moved the breeze  
sighed with our uncertainties,

the universe without intent,  
and bright exquisite accident.

## Memory And Dream

If you come looking for me you will only  
find me in solitude and silence, in a green  
basin of light with its wildflower breakers.

Are we tired yet of the dark dependencies,  
fit for the mindless integrities of nature,  
at eye-level here, seen from the sunken lane,

wildflowers dancing in fields, yellow and white,  
white and yellow, and calming the human eye,  
till you'd wish to stay here in the heart forever?

In the sadness and the longing without purpose  
there is peculiar beauty, neither the mind  
nor the Self exist, but only their process.

Still here is the house of the interpreter,  
like sea-light the waves of the ocean grasses,  
never lonely in memory or in dream.

## Between The Rivers

No we don't understand the beauty  
of inhuman nature, why to us  
the stream is lovely, or why  
light on the granite quivers  
or, with the poplar leaves, shakes  
a glitter at formless dark.

The beauty in us, that is, where things  
are not quite things, nor words  
or names, but heart's confusion  
and memories trying to be;  
and a longing for lasting sweetness;  
and the deep love of existence.

No we don't know why certain places  
are not places in the mind but around  
the mind, as the river goes round  
the island, the wind about the tree.  
Here are my rivers, the Wye, the Dove:  
the one cannot rest, the other answer.

## After The Dream

When all this slips away it will slip  
past mind and out, will easily  
sift back to the fields and valleys,  
just as the wide paleolithic waters  
carved here and subsided, easily.

It will disappear like the meteor  
leaving only its atoms, stubborn  
remainders, be nothing of empire  
or republic, be rather the patience  
the process, and beyond the human.

The poet can only then be leaf or star:  
Puck dismissed with Oberon, Titania,  
into the shadows, all of the mischief  
with the dream. We need it seems  
to understand the richness, brevity.

Since if we understood we would  
never accept the world we created,  
the one that builds over the flowers  
and streams, decaying, corrupting.  
We would have reclaimed whatever

expressed the beauty we feel in mind,  
(denied the monster), realised that we  
were its sole source, ours the freedom  
to deny reality, create the real, flow  
backwards, forwards through the mass,

until it breathes fire, leavened by fire,  
all violence done with, compassion here,  
that has no equivalent in inhuman nature,  
but is the creature's home and excellence,  
this pity for universe, transience, ourselves.

## Icarus

And if the mind after death were only a dreaming,  
pale mountains formed of the ghosts of living things,  
like the Himalayan limestones, of shoals of creatures  
and lost seas, Siva's dance, a birth and death of stars.

All the elements, all the bits of life, out of their life  
and death, the flare of stars, where Icarus silent soars  
among the suns, beyond the sun finding other suns,  
his father's art. In the moment of his fall he feels free.

Too vast all this, too complex, intricate, too layered  
to comprehend, all the bright climes, oceans, galaxies.  
A beauty beyond beauty, this beauty of the non-human,  
because our ghosts have touched here, and passed by.

## **No Redemption**

For the moon blew through me,  
and the wind caressed me,  
and all meaning left me,  
in the blue of evening.

In the wind of evening  
where all meaning vanished  
though the light caressed me  
and the moon above me.

For the wind blew through me,  
and the moon caressed me,  
and I lost my heart at evening  
past all hope of redemption.

## Perhaps

Perhaps we will be more tender here,  
among the stars. Quieter like the stones,  
the trees, the bones of the creatures  
light under their veils of earth.

There is no secret more gentle than  
the flowers, the wildflowers down  
their fields, rivers and stars of our  
long-loved long-abandoned planet.

There is nothing more tender than  
this green sanctuary. These cliffs  
darkening the shrine of self,  
the sweet waters of the mind.

Perhaps we can be more as we tried  
to dream among the stars, bright  
fragments of something beyond  
the need to haunt and question.

Make peace with ourselves here,  
eschew the violence once, and for  
all, admire and cherish the beauty,  
that comes out of us and flows on.

Perhaps we can be the flicker of light  
caught in the coils of the stream,  
and the animal joy again, wild  
with the universal wildness.

## **The Mountain Sang**

Let us go, on the hidden paths of quiet survival,  
reverence for the quiet while the noise subsides,  
let us love the wild types of randomness, muted  
emotion, in the unknowable non-human regions.

There rights flow from values in the democracy  
of feeling; sadness, love, not anger, at being frail  
vessels among the stars. We will no longer be  
lost spirits, Blake's sprites mildewing the corn.

Yes all poetry is an elegy for life, yes the world  
waits silently, without watching, as we pass by,  
yes you are not mine (and let none be possessed),  
but I called you so because you are here in me.

So let bright constellations rise, float and fall,  
in stillness of night absorb encircling light  
watch the mystery, be yourself: no matter  
what world believes, the mountain sang for you.

## Sweet In The Tree

Sweet in the tree and in the stones,  
the secret places, like Proust's flow  
of inscrutable memories invoked  
by blind fragments of existence,

until the coil of the silver stream,  
the shadow of the little wood,  
the walks we take, the dazzle  
of the senses give us an entry,

somehow, dazed, confused  
to life itself, or rather what hovers  
in us between the mind and real,  
partaking slightly of both,

but in itself neither, in itself  
a glint, a gleam of the flower  
of a face, of the human thus  
the inhuman, wildly both,

and bitter too, and only sweet  
not in the given but created,  
alive by how much we grant  
it life, and valued by how much

we award it value, in a universe  
meaningless therefore to us tiny  
so contained in an insect's wing  
or the puerile glitter on water,

yet sweet in its non-intent,  
so sweet in a tree or stone,  
in a lichen-green rib of bark,  
or the brittle bed of an ocean.

## Preparing For The Journey

We too in our desire for freedom and time  
will fail to stem the tide that carries away  
all the strange and delicate fellow creatures,  
all these familiar to us, alien to alien, forms.

We too, by proxy, will set fire to the grasses,  
decimate trees, foul the blue, sour the green,  
carve a machine road through our existence  
and in our billions decry the life outside us.

It is in the nature of the unintended to fail  
to foresee the consequence of its accident.  
It is in our nature to survive and kill the light  
that grants survival, to despise the darkness,

fill it with tiny lights that fail to dispel,  
scar the earth and be incapable always  
of regaining the heights of our own past,  
whether gone ages, or drowned memories.

How could we ever imagine we might control  
a reality that is so much inside and beyond us  
that we cannot even see the shape of the self,  
can do little except ride our feelings' current?

How could we ever place our trust in others  
too like ourselves, intellects weak as ours,  
or try to direct what has only ever seemed  
to drive the ages of mind, not be driven,

an out-folding of chance, cast of the crystal,  
the way a cloud formed, or the sand blew,  
a something ebbing and flowing, near, far,  
a coming-to-being for us, a drawing-away?

We would need to have learnt a whole new vision, far from religion, and trite morality, a vision of living values, a way to recapture the first of the freedoms in our early world.

Then only, we might come to that first planet with reverence in our bodies, care in minds, as the ship sinks down through strange gravity to light like a dubious insect on the flower.

We might step again into the golden grasses, by the bright lake-shore where we all began, free at last of our gods and demons, ready to conceive a way of being in this universe.

## Out Of The Noise

Out of the noise of humankind  
shift to the universe behind,

name it, it escapes your names,  
like time devours itself in flames.

Here's the city, a closing door  
on wilderness we can't endure,

though saved by silent lakes and trees,  
an unknown flower, the alien seas.

See, with the heart, the burning flow,  
that place we seldom dare to go,

into the movement of the real,  
the vital leaf, the forms we steal,

the insect curled, the waving line,  
the complex structures of the mind,

water like hair, clouds that foam,  
slow cascades, a light-streaked dome,

spiralling storm or wind-blown rill,  
rotating galaxies bright and still.

Nature twines and coils and sings  
in great as in little things.

## The Unicorn

When we are all equal in abilities  
(I mean in the age of the machines)  
what price competition? Creativity,  
on the other hand, will set us free,

since experience, and serendipity,  
the basis of deep art, both combine  
with form in the true creative mind,  
and the age of replication will be

strangely the age of the individual,  
while we will depute the collective,  
and mechanical, to the horde process,  
out of which streams the identical.

The rare in us, when all will be the best,  
will be the personal, the queerly blessed,  
the unicorn realised, the unique verse  
nothing in us knew or could rehearse.

## Dances Of The Hare

Under Orion, the Bear, Andromeda  
the hare lies deep under the grass,  
who used to dance and box above,  
on moonlit nights, in the pure glow.

So many hares, in the refuge of stars,  
under the black grass in the sweet dark,  
dancing my mind away, flickering mad  
leaving serpentine trails over the field.

The fragile collar bones lie there, down  
under the limestone soil, out of the air,  
their fallen brightness, and they are  
neither content nor discontented, no

shadow of substance nor living shadow,  
but pockets of what was life, ores, reefs  
of the living, lives no longer stressed,  
no longer hunted, keepers of the night.

And my whole mind seeps down silent  
into the ground, then resurrected there,  
rises again like the falcon flashing  
into the quiet air, counterthrusting death.

## Chasing The Nightingale

Ghosts in September air, of worlds, of seas,  
of moon and meaning, mind and mystery,  
are no more than ghosts of you, and I it seems  
a mere echo of other selves I might have been,

that now moves substance-less as the breeze,  
through the dark cadence of September trees,  
round these high skies, the silhouettes of time  
in which you lurk, the frame in which you mime

across the hours and years: if I think of you  
I think of a friendship deeper now than love,  
a love deeper than friendship, they are two  
aspects of that lost brightness drowned above

in levels of grey cloud, long shafts of light  
the bringers of a sweetness before the night,  
where the bird sings, where the silence falls,  
and something of us out of the quiet calls,

each to each. Ours is the purpose and not  
this universe determines our existence  
but inner fire that through us cries desire,  
the universe that through us comes to be,

chasing the nightingale. We the finite,  
that must forever exhaust the infinite,  
that in our loving art a purpose finds.  
Intention lives in mind: we are the minds.

## Nothing Else At All

And then for me every moment everything was at stake,  
life was at stake, as it is for the flickering creatures  
only here in mind, the mind at stake and its meaning.

Like Leonardo heightening the flow, deepening shadow,  
sharpening the mountains, softening the tender face,  
drawing hair, and leaves, and watery tendrils brighter,

nothing was art, all life. The life embedded so darkly  
in the art the two are seamless. As the creature blends  
into its native background, though awkward in the light.

Or else what should we do here, simply be others?  
For me the precipice was real, the void we walk on,  
the substance of the bird, feather and claw was real,

and everything at stake, nothing handed down untried,  
nothing unquestioned, everything un-believed, until  
freedom was staked, liberty of the heart and intellect,

so that love, truth, beauty where all is at stake transcend  
the living, the idea exceeds the living, vivifies the dead,  
in a place where we bring ourselves, nothing else at all.

## Green Hollow

Passing by limestone wall, my shadow  
darkens a green hollow,  
a space in the stones, a crevice  
a cleft, masking the light,  
to intercept, with a movement of self,  
the fall of brightness  
into its carved intricate shape  
which like a cave for the imagination  
of a child to fill,  
is solid absence, a continuity between  
long-before-me, and present-after,  
part of the real, and cradled here.

How real am I? Process at least, of mind,  
a dark more complex still  
with memories, with knowledge, and desires,  
sweeter to us, true, and all to me,  
yet more transient than this hole in nature,  
more ghostlike still  
than this stone cell that will survive me.  
As I go by, its heart re-fires, light sinks  
again inside, deep to its core,  
the green mossed contour full of seed  
and twigs, fragments of world,  
outlasting my darkness passing.

## Privacy

I like the privacy of the expressionless  
mind, inner thought, selves that never  
betray their feelings, the unexaggerated

opposite of the drama, whatever keeps  
its counsel, the soundless courtyard,  
above it a mute glittering star-filled sky.

I like those with everything to say who  
say nothing, who lack the desire to solve  
a single issue, or if they have stay dumb.

I like the contemplation of a bare horizon,  
the way the infinite reaches, purposeless,  
out beyond mind, lacking mind, existent,

free of authority, purpose, or possession.  
I like still tongues, quiet reflective faces,  
the hard to read, the thoughts we cannot know.

## Nostalgia

Nostalgia for gone things is always  
a vision of some paradise,  
whatever it is we longed for,  
lost love, lost Earth, a dream  
of how it might have been to live  
in another time with other aspirations.

Nostalgia always that desire for home,  
where the lover waits forever  
for us with all our failings,  
always that ache of transience,  
the craving to have the moment stay  
so fierce we fail to live it as it passes.

## **Our Place**

Here is our place beyond the sun,  
the orbit where sad children run,  
dreaming pale Jupiter and Mars.

They are within, the billion stars,  
like roses glittering on the stem,  
they die in us, as we die in them.

## The Quiet House

In the quiet house,  
its four walls open,  
to the mind inside  
without you, in the silence  
of intricate thought,  
recalcitrant memory  
is itself quiet,  
seems an in-expectant waiting,  
that waits for nothing  
more, that is, than the quiet,  
of a quiet mind thinking.

In the sudden hush after  
the movement of return,  
the mind intensely still,  
you present like an echo,  
a soundless repetition  
in space free of the human  
the empty space of being,  
existing for no purpose:  
to be without someone  
forever is like no other parting,  
absence meeting yearning  
that finds no resolution.

In the quiet house  
the image of my fancy  
rotates in inner brightness:  
it is calm, it is lovely,  
like the rose on the stem,  
fusing air and sunlight,  
in mirror of my seeing,  
is resonance of knowing  
though gone beyond all knowing,  
into another silence,  
out of the quiet house.

## The Silence Of A Planet

The silence of a planet  
that lacks our history  
is never the silence  
of our human places,  
only its own un-aging silence.

No Orion hangs in space,  
other constellations,  
dark galaxies, gas-clouds,  
in jewelled omnipresence  
to end the age of iron.

Here the new dawn caught us,  
fleeing through the aeons,  
to this place where no  
bones lie under turf  
or granite, where no life was

until we grounded, here.  
No gulls cry in the stillness  
over these bright waters,  
its treeless horizons  
glitter with sleepless licence.

The silence of this planet  
is the silence before life  
not the sound, after dying,  
of Earth, or our sighing,  
under other stars.

## **Exactly**

In the eye there is no one there.  
In the shadow there is no one there.  
In the drop of rain and in the cloud  
there is no one there.

In the lightning there is nothing there.  
In the mind there is nothing there.  
In the gust of wind and in the night  
there is nothing there.

## So

You can't know that. Too many  
things, you can't know that.  
Who in the future if a future  
might read a line and think  
you can't know that.

Passing whatever on. You  
can't know that. And when,  
in what slice of landscape,  
by what light, into what  
kind of eyes. You can't know that.

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