

*Untrafficed wisdom murmurs on untrammelled.
While ears receive its music
And feet its rhythms,
Words must await the swelling chorus
Along its thoroughfare.*

SELDOM MET ARE THOSE WHO SELDOM PLAY

Once kindly squirrels did climb my trees
And grass untended knelt to softened strolls;
Once waters leapt and ran above my puny dams
And water birds flew soaring over grass and trees;
Once hugging strangers lay beneath the filtered daylight shade
And gentle winds transported gentle thoughts;
Once daylight knew the night as couples fondly know
And twilight rustled sheets to be their bed;
Once darkness was a hush ... within an endless joy
And eyelids saw the everlasting sights;
Once thoroughfares paraded all the beauty of all truths
And gentle hands of love guided all ...

... to find in love ...
... in love to find ...

... the truth each had intimately intimately called.

(Music: Respighi's *Ancient Airs And Dances*, 1st suite, 2nd item)

FLUFFINESS

*On the watchtower
your incoherent playthings
come to wrenching life.*

'Where is my sister?' says the boy;
'Where has she gone? Why did she leave?'
The parents trade a brand new toy
For his appetite to grieve.
A bright-eyed bear, all stuffed, all fur;
He holds it close so it will stay.
This fluffiness he stuffs – with her,
And so she cannot go away.

She stays and grows throughout the years;
All his toy animals soon learn
The bear's parading of her tears,
Becoming her – each in its turn.
As he grows older he forgets
The sorrow once held tight within;
That drumming plaything soon begets
A universe that is her grin.

This world so foreign, distance wide;
Stars receding, scolding sun.
'Where does it go? What does it hide?'
Questions many – answers none.
Till when on lookout with the self,
You touch the fluffiness you bear:
Alive the toys leap from the shelf!
You stare into your sister's stare.

AT THE CROSSROADS

At the Crossroad: four paths converging and you tread one
To the common juncture, and then move forwardly on.
And as you do, you separate out two long roads,
Forming *your* crossroad. One Crossroad, but three crossroads.

Pray we rovers remember that under a bewitching onslaught of names
We unceasingly encounter this fundamental Crossroad:

The retreating road of *Denial*, abidingly unlearnable
(it is not; it is neither me nor other)
The two-headed crossroad of *Communion*,
(this is me; that is not me)
The two-headed crossroad of *Bewilderment*
(it is this other; it is not that other)
The persuasive crossroad of *Acceptance*
(it is; it is both me and other)

When you greet a situation

There's a matching separation
Where the meanings are the same.
That is, for *you* they are the same.
Live that matching situation,
Be that matching separation,
Till they whisper you their name.
One name, two name, they're the same.
Disowned while the separation
Molds you to the situation,
No one, no where, is to blame.
You're your own self when you're weaned tame.
Oh hero – from daring to unknowns; from anguish to blest,
Feel – your sorrows seek visions of why we're distressed;
But know – each vision unfolding cradles home your true guest..

THE CHORUSED WIND

(i) *sonnet*

‘Come play with me, come play with me’,
The chorused wind off on a spree
Conclaves its motley crew again,
‘This time, this time, we may *all* win’.

‘Come crashing down, come crashing down,
A jumbled heap emits the sound’;
The storyteller unfurls his pen.

‘Come dancing round, come dancing round,
Come dance the singing of the mound’;
The jumbled heap unfurls her shin.

‘Come presence found, come presence found,
Shin, fingers, torso, all unwound;
O shining face – unfurl your grin,
As we, all true eyed, mingle again’.

(ii) *villanelle*

The queen through fingertips yeas her command;
The maiden simply dances out her song;
The goddess burrows light where she may stand.

The people wander on the fog-tombed land,
Until as clear as day’s resounding gong
The queen through fingertips yeas her command.

The storytellers ponder on the sand.
Sedately sculptured dunes may show ere long
The goddess burrows light where she may stand.

Sand-dappled feet embolden maiden’s hand
To playfully decree a chorused throng;
The queen through fingertips yeas her command.

Perplexing patterned footprints sorely manned
Erupt as cosmic candles thralling strong;
The goddess burrows light where she may stand.

Such light intense: the clearing sees as planned
By triform tell – as sight attends each wrong –
The queen through fingertips yeas her command:
The goddess burrows light where she may stand.

INSIDE ST. PAUL'S

The statuary fingers pray limp rosaries
To stately glory, their highest good;
The vaulting domes, the dome,
Groan a groan no longer heard below
As if in silence they truly floated -
The staggering pillars holding up mere nothing,
Mere whispers that scamper 'round to ponder
The beauty of beheld design on those below.

Communion here is held at midday;
Each frail act of supremacy
May sun itself beneath this dome.
Our architect is dead (or so spent whispers mouth);
With brittle fingers raised the children of the world
Strain to resurrect design and consecrate themselves.

SILHOUETTES

Say is there many or say is there one;
Where sunlight abides shadows are wary –
Silhouettes contemplate *integration*.

After the seance in tune has begun
Mediums thoughtful might hear a fairy
Say is there many or say is there one.

Magic bears witness, what's lost and what's won,
But spells at such games need to be chary –
Silhouettes contemplate *integration*.

When the methodical spade work is done
Memory's coffers riddled can nary
Say is there many or say is there one.

Attention may key its figures to run
Down rigid truth with sums that don't carry –
Silhouettes contemplate *integration*.

Back to the night where all light has begun,
Luminates gone there's nothing to vary;
So say is there many? Say is there one?
Silhouettes contemplate *integration*.

HARVEST TIME

Harvest time,
tumultuous incest hastens towards the end
where sowers will outrage
the porous children of their seed
to reap the blushing sweetness
oozing from each limb.

The harvest itself calls to them,
bids beyond the late veneer
of their shared cultivation,
bids to sickles – fell me now
in august communion,
wafer blessing lips.

Awaited harvest swallowed whole:
sunlight rapes the moon.

MY SLAVERY

My slavery is just your savage game.
But flesh is not a pawn to move or take;
My fetters honor breasts you shall not tame.

My finery but hid my inner flame.
Although my naked flesh is true for fake,
My slavery is just your savage game.

Prize wrapped my hampered limbs invent my shame;
While fearful flesh may blush itself awake,
My fetters honor breasts you shall not tame.

As pains may beat, so tortured flesh may claim
Every blow admits, every welt and ache,
My slavery is just your savage game.

But unconvinced prime flesh may kneel my name
Prone to your whim – must this a self unmake?
My fetters honor breasts you shall not tame.

My flesh is but a pawn to stroke or maim.
My savage breasts forged chains for their own sake.
My slavery is just their savage game.
My fetter honored breasts shall wean me tame.

REVELATIONS

(i) *The arrow's flight that wins all battles* (4 = 1 + 1 + 1 + 1)

Immortal absence, lack of presence behind the mask
Shatters the fragrant mirror spewing shards
Heaping pockets full of fragments; so many feeble orbits,
All with stale colors, unsteady lights, each movement empty:
Life atop my jagged jumble of bitter glass.

(ii) *The two-edged sword of strife* (4 = 1 + 1 + 2)

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower,
Drives my green age *to* smash the roots of trees.

The force that drives the waters through the rocks,
Drives my red blood *to* dry the mouthing stream.

The hand that whirls the water in the pool,
Stirs the quicksand *to* rope the blowing wind.
The lips of time leech to the fountainhead,
Love drips and gathers *to* the fallen blood.

(with apologies to Dylan Thomas)

(iii) *Famine – the serpent's tongue, the triple Hecate's team* (4 = 1 + 3)

Now the hungry lion roars:
If you pardon we will mend
That you have but slumbered here
Following darkness like a dream.

I am sent with broom before
Whilst the heavy plowman snores
Now to scape the serpent's tongue
While these visions did appear.

Gentles do not reprehend
To sweep the dust behind the door
By the triple Hecate's team
We will make amends ere long.

(from the fairy's finale to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer's Night Dream*)

(iv) *plague, with death following after* (4 = 2 + 2)

I crouch by a lake feeding a single swan
Whatever from my pockets it finds nourishing;
Then wait for the beat of its mighty wings,
To watch for the color of the whiteness of its rise.

(v) *The faithful fallen blood* (4 = 4)

My grip that keeps these shadows from their stride,
My fist that molds life's raucous heaving sides,
My hands that cup love's gushing whirling pride,
My eyes that lid dawn's tender muted guides,
I open thee to let all be.

(vi) The rise of the missing angel (5 = 2 + 3)

The toads that carol shy rocks in the pond,
For my fleet apparel – thank you croaking wand.

My sins each yearning perpetual light,
Thank you for my ground, for my sky, for my sight.

Devils with knives slashing souls into rags,
Thank you for my freedom from moldering eggs.

Lambs with their fleece lying slain in their blood,
You shimmer us grace as we embrace the flood:

Conception so mild, immaculate child,
You cherish my me-ness, no matter how wild,

Conceiving me right now the way I am styled,
Thanks for the now that is never defiled.

Darkness that aches with the not-yet-here here,
My eyes feel blindfolds where I ago smiled;
I thank you for nearness, I thank you for fear.

Ariels trapped by my deep-rooted grasp,
The Triumph of Life – fated shipwreck appear;
When was our Actium? Where bides our asp?

Ariels storming my ships into sight,
Well shuffled together – see how we clasp.
Strange bed-mates reflect when the sun shines moonlight.

Drowned shade show us life – when bottom is top:
‘There is only one side to life’s bitter fight;
We harvest together – the war may not stop’.

Ariels dancing my dreams all about,
Thank you for my life but my death is my crop,
There straight to the bottom will sink my held doubt.

I stand like a cripple, I find like a thief;
Deep in the Sea now my City will shout.
I wait for its words, I pray they’ll be brief.

(vii) And there was silence in heaven for about half an hour (5 = 5)

Sweet shoulders that weave your arms madly about,
Oh you are free and I may be
For freely love may carry me
As I may freely let us be,
Freely, freely, freely, free.

THE NOW AND COMING WORLD

*no longer to stick one's head
in the sand of celestial things,
but to carry it freely, an earthly head
that gives meaning to the earth.*

– Nietzsche

The terror of it all,
The now and coming world,
When each star shines itself alone,
And the chairs of the banquet scrape forward
Dissolving every constellation.

Oh that clearing sky.
Such blank terror in that clearing,
That clearing of solidifying sand –
Beached celestial dust upholding moist new earth
Where I meet our embrace
For the first time
Unclouded unilluminated clear,
Where you become
The embracing arms you are,
Where I become

The terror of it all,
Each star sitting upright at the feast.
Can I possibly twirl my masks fast enough then –
When the starlight net drops softly on my head
And I lie gasping on the boards of the fisherman's boat.
No longer then the storytellers,
We become the story.

ABIDING PRESENCE

When broken symmetries awake,
Strewn prayers restrain our cresting ache.
The tide bereft of falling tears,
We float upon our fears.

When rooted scruples grip their leaf,
Migrating colors groom our grief.
The streams of melting bedrock cross,
We sink within our loss.

When rampant symmetries run all,
Such myriad hues embrace their fall.
The rising waterlines bespeak –
It is our loss we seek.

When gushing wells flood paeans clear,
We hear the silent lips, we hear
Abiding presence bid – partake:
We seek ourselves – awake.

We seek ourselves awake. Awake
We sleepers – rise! Implore our ache:
We are each we, we are each all,
So close, the rootless call.

The cresting wave, the spume, the call:
Group action symmetries befall.
The back and forth, the forth and back,
Vast silting tides attack.

Ourselves unfurled, as one – attack:
The pebbles form, each in their stack.
We put them down, we take them back;
My pack, your pack, our pack.

Unkind kind pack, unkind kind pack,
Rough symmetries consume our lack:
Well shuffled eyes with clearing sight
Will see abiding night;

Will see each shade (that's not at hand)
Securely there by group command,
A presence granted – action free;
And opened eyes will see:

All things betoken symmetries broken;
Symmetries broken are promises made,
Promising freedom to some poor trapped shade;
Symmetries woken are due on demand.

SAY

(logos - a sunset speaks)

Say: Why does silence start propelled
to wander as warm breath again
into what lovely lips impelled
and wear its death again?

The rain soaked grass, receding clouds;
bare feet below, bare face above;
life's carpet holds death's vanished shroud,
seek not its trace above.

This gushing green soaked world of deeds
holds to its course as coursing blood
through veins, through strategies, through needs
delivers an enforcing flood

Of orphaned twilights fully meant
So rich with sorrows rich lament;

Oh thickened balm - emolument -
Pain's debt well calmed - troths' full payment:

The stars hold joys as distant unfelt words;
Their meanings wander homeless underfoot;
Kind hands there walk with them and kindly put
Each at an altar to some unknelt word.

The hurricane of sameless change bellows;
These sacred altars alter - seamless words.
The vapor of the same in change billows;
Alter's sacred altars - Thee - seamless words:

O Silence, thou art Art's design unyoked;
Speak: *'Hear your balm - in me you truly met
The gushing billows of my shroud ensoaked
With orphaned twilights there so fully met
Where by your lovely hands we are impelled
My death again to bear upheld'*.

COMING HITHER

Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.

I will do such things –
What they are yet I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep.
No, I'll not weep.
I have full cause of weeping; (*storm and tempest*) but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
Or ere I'll weep. O Fool, I shall go mad!
Thou art the thing itself! Unaccommodated man
is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art.
Off, off you lendings! Come, unbutton here.

(*he tears off his clothes*)

Robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw does pierce it.

None does offend, none, I say none; I'll able 'em.

Take that of me my friend, (*giving flowers*) who have the power
To seal th'accusers' lips. Get thee glass eyes,
And like a scurvy politician seem
To see the things thou dost not. *Now, now, now, now!*
Pull off my boots. Harder, harder – so.
It were a delicate stratagem to shoe
A troop of horse with felt. I'll put it in proof;
And when I have stolen upon these son-in-laws,
Then kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

(*He throws down his flowers and stamps on them*)

And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more;
Never, never, never, never, never.
Pray you *undo this button*. Thank you sir.
Do you see this? Look on her! Look, her lips!

Look there! Look there! (*He dies*)

(From Shakespeare's *King Lear* I.i.90; II.iv.275–281;
III.iv.103–105; IV.vi.166–174,185–188; V.iii.305–309)

RIPENESS IS ALL

Like held in breath, serene and motionless
stands the nymph inside the ripening tree. Deep below,
moist roots trawl the compliant darkness. On the sonorous
dried-up earth of the forest drums the flight of the faun,
horns like forking branches yearning to tap their own elusive musk.

And so the hidden nymph appears as both
the unapproachable priestess and the all surrendering slave;
withdrawing her anointing, prostrate with her presence, neither
can still clasp the gifts that flow so freely through the nymph,
erect within her shelter of ripening robes and gowns.

Meaning hostage in a word - appearances so cruelly halved -
barnyards bleating of the jungles - ancient memories
clutching wriggling empty skin. On, on you lendings!
Such a poor, bare, forked animal is unaccommodating man.

I wander within corridors, pace about furnished rooms;
I leave through doorways, walk down sidewalks, climb a hill;
I stroll on grass, visit gardens, amble within groves
to sleep beneath a tree. And all the time
I am standing oh quite still while the world flows by.

I see a tree in the distance; it is small – insignificant.
As I attend it grows larger, green and brown dissolving
into bark and leaves; soon I am within its shade,
shelter towering well above me. And then it's gone.
Thus time also flows from the future to the past.

I stand within a waterfall: maiden torrents drench my head;
lapping supine at my feet aging sirens pool.
I sleep within a pregnant cradle, gently rocking, back and forth;
the art of known and feeling sorrows wholes itself into good pity.

(In the first stanza,
the first sentence as well as the third sentence minus its last line
are the Mitchell translations of two fragments by Rilke
of one of the abandoned *Sonnets to Orpheus*)

GOING HENCE
(even as coming hither)

(You wake) I heard my name proclaimed,

And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escaped the hunt, *bootless*. Whiles I may 'scape,
Ever, ever, ever, ever, ever,
I will preserve myself. That's something yet.

(You avoid stepping on a pile of your wilted flowers)

Grow, grow, grow, grow, grow, grow! If
When grief has mates, and bearing fellowship
In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee,
Conceit may rob the treasury of life.
So – softly, softly. Put on your boots.
Flow, flow, flow, flow! Almost too small for sight.
You are much deceived, in nothing am I changed,
By your eye's anguish. Exchange charity
To prove upon thy heart (*giving you flowers*) O our life's sweetness!

The country gives me proof and precedent.

Of men's impossibilities the gods
Are just and of our pleasant vices make
Instruments to enforce their charity.

(You put on the proffered robes and furred gowns)

The privilege of mine, t'assume a semblance
Men must endure: their going hence even as their coming hither;
Ripeness is all, thou unsubstantial air that I embrace.
Reason in madness, whose wrong thoughts defile thee
In the voice of a nightengale. My heart
Breaks at it (*moonlight at noon*). This is above all strangeness,
And am bethought,
Had thought been past, thy life's a miracle.
Not sure, though hoping of this good success, I
Bear free and patient thoughts.

Speak yet again: the worst returns to laughter.

(spoken by Edgar, in *King Lear* II.iii.1–3; *V.iii.292*; II.iii.5–6; II.iii.21;
III.vi.106, 111; IV.vi.42–43; IV.vi.20,6; V.iii.182; II.iii.13; IV.vi.74;
V.iii.168–169; II.iii.20; V.iii.127,185; V.ii.9–11; IV.i.7; IV.vi.176; III.vi.110;
II.iii.6; IV.vi.143,66; II.iii.6; IV.vi.45,55; V.iii.192–193; IV.vi.80,55; IV.i.6)

AIR (to be sung)

Good morning fair lady, your yawning enlightened,
You open your eyes and our world then appears.
The darkness embraces this dawning of graces,
Exhaling prevailing to retrace your fair face.

'All faces here are the same'.

Unknowns, you quiet our grieving. For then we know ...

At noontime fair lady, all shining, all shining,
Like dew from the dawn I then too disappear.
The fallen now rises, you harvest my prizes,
By tithing each erase disguising your fair place.

'All places here are the same'.

All known, you show us your weaving. For then we show ...

At twilight fair lady, red–white all in purple,
Like teardrops from rose leaves I then reappear.
The banquet is ready, the fare is quite heady,
All baseness, all graceness, served equally here.

'Anointing all darings the same'.

You nurtured our caring now forgo your stare.

In darkness fair lady, your absence immortal,
Through the Portals of Sorrow I walk with my fear.
Foul orchards, foul waters, foul tortures, foul slaughters,
How can I frame reply O lady to deny
My held fears, my felled ears, my mute facts, my brute acts,
Outracing each shimmer in this fight without sight?

'When moonlight is sunlight our day sees our night.

Now open your heart and let true night impart'.

Sweet slumber fair lady our midnight is nigh,
You breath in our air and you breath out a sigh.
Sunlight and moonlight dance low then dance high,
With soft serenading invading the sky.
This night foul and frightful, it is but the same
As your breathing delightful,
faced through the base of my own daring frame.

At midnight fair lady, your absence all shining,
Sheltered in slumber you in truth disappear.
O deathless departed, imparting though breathless
Your fine lace of sweet song to sear strong your fair grace.

'All graces here are the same'.

You nurtured our sharing, now sing our night air.

Sweet dreaming fair lady, eternity nears,
I cleave to your lips and our true night appears.

(From Steinbeck's *East of Eden*): "The King James version says this – it is when Jehovah says, 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and *thou shalt* rule over him.' It was the 'thou shalt' that struck me, because it was a promise that Cain would conquer sin. . . .

"Then I got a copy of the American Standard Bible. . . . It says, '*Do thou* rule over him.' Note this is very different. This is not a promise, it is an order. And I began to stew about it. I wondered what the original word of the original writer had been that these very different translations could be made.

"...in our family there are a number of ancient reverend gentlemen who are great scholars. They are thinkers in exactness. . . .

"My old gentlemen felt that these words were important too – 'Thou shalt' and 'Do thou'. And this was the gold from our mining: '*Thou mayest*'. 'Thou mayest rule over sin.' . . . the Hebrew word, the word *timshel* – 'Thou mayest' – that gives a choice. It might be the most important word in the world.

THE CROSSROADS

a sonnet

In the depth of forlorn hopes there awake
A tragic pulse that wanders in a play,
A mask that watches all behind their masks
Through formal patterns weave a heartfelt ache:
That heartless grasp that speaks their common way –
Allotting each its proper joys and tasks;
Just as each hope had
(... ↙ ... → ... ↘ ...)
pondered in each part.

That grasp through formal dances too partakes
In tragedies beneath that pulsing day –
That day in which that pulse covertly basks:
Giving what it gives; taking what it takes.
Till wide-eyed mask completes the roundelay;
'Timshel' – the weaned and weaning – each one asks:
Poor mask buds its may:→ dark pulse boads the shall:↙
do thou:↘ bids cruel grasp
(as time revolves its ever sounding song)
'we merge to at last
as one emerge into our own one heart'.

THE SOUND IS SO CLEAR

The sound is so clear.

With dampened breath my lungs
Turn quivering air into mighty ears
As music is rehearsed within my breasts.
Two conducted ensembles where,
In one: what I know is talked over
To grow my comings a familiar tongue;
In the other: what I feel is dressed
With an orchestra that bears
My going hence as music flowing.
Two eyes producing a single song,
The song of joyous sorrowings,
That teaches me our mighty rights
Plus my one little wrong
That keeps good pity clearly in my sight:

I overspill my cup to welcome home: myself, yourself – those rovers . . .

To gather your delights,
To hold them in my heart,
Is my most fervent goal.

For then in my own sight
Will I never be apart
From the beauty of my soul.

A road both broad and straight,
Beneath a gentle sun,
Is yearning for my strides.

Your flowers there await,
Clustered along both sides
Once my journey has begun.

They show me my true prides
With their fragrance true and rare,

. . . With their precious breaths of air.

JEWELS ANOINT

Quietly; gently;
When fingers touch
And held attention leaks out through the eyes,
The immensity
That is aloneness
Descends from its aloof and mighty perch
(Silent solitary)
Trusting to be cherished,
Willing to be nurtured and cherished,
Cherishing the waters that mingle where it bathes.

Gently; soft and gently;
It preens its delights in a shimmering so full
That there is space
Where fingered palm may melt . . . to clasp with fingered palm
Like two embracing teardrops
Dissolving their sorrows as a single glowing pool
Of liquid night;
And yet remain as two still distant planets,
Shores with waving palms and branches,
Forests coursing with their creatures
(Such fierce and joyous roars).

Softly; soft and tender;
Two sparring partners circle in a ring
Surrounded by the hidden depths
Of their just arena.
Wary circling circles,
Cautious circles circled,
Arms surround surrounding arms.
Each a world
(Silent stationary);
Each a moon to each
Whose trancing gaze each spells the words
That grant their common name.

Tenderly; lovingly;
Aloneness hugs
(Ah its sheltered sighs)
As distant echoes silently respond
Naming
And aloneness hugs
To meet itself at last
(Oh bright and wondrous star).
Jewel escorting jewel
To dwell with itself as the precious gem
Among precious gems
That all alone
It is.