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Eruv

Eryn Green
University of Denver

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Eruv

A dissertation

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In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Eryn Green

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Advisor: Eleni Sikelianos

Author: Eryn Green
Title: Eruv
Advisor: Eleni Sikelianos
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ABSTRACT

Eruv is a collection of poems exploring the interstices between the Judaic concept of Eruvin and the poetic traditions of dictation, field and personist poetics. The poems that represent the body of this work are explorations of the ways in which poetry empties and fills a space, and what might be implied for our shared conceptions of ‘Home’ and ‘Self’ by these tendencies.

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I: HISTORY AND CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

Eruv and the forms of a doorway

My dissertation project is titled after the Hebrew concept of *Eruv*, a class of mediating enclosures that are seen symbolically to extend the threshold of the private home out into the communal world, thus enabling observers to leave their houses on the Sabbath when doing so would otherwise be prohibited. Generally unobtrusive, made by stringing wire or yarn high above street level between tree branches or light poles, *Eruvin* (in plural) solve the problem of carrying (and carrying-on with) anything, including one's self, outside of the parameters of the home on the Sabbath, when doing so without an *Eruv* would constitute "work" and therefore be an affront to God, who gave the seventh day to rest.

For observant practitioners, one of the primary activities prohibited on the Sabbath is *Hotza'a*, or transferring or carrying any object from one domain to another, such as from the inside to the outside of the home. As Adam Mintz writes in his 2011 dissertation for the Department of Hebrew and Judaic studies at NYU, "The concept of an Eruv was introduced in the Mishnaic period in Roman Palestine in order to allow Jews to carry their possessions into the *hazer*, the semi-private courtyards around which several Jewish families lived, on the Sabbath." The

exception of the *Eruv* is the result of scholarly Rabbinical interpretation (midrash) of the biblical story of King Solomon's building of the *Beis Ha'Mikdosh*, or the Holy Temple. The Rabbis read Solomon's building as an act of mapping out a new shared space for the communal experience of the divine¹ in the world—a broadening of the parameters of the inner sanctum of the Temple's Holy of Holies (the innermost room where the Ark of the Covenant was kept) so that more could be included in communal prayer and experience proximity to the Divine. Seeing little reason why a home could not be expanded in a similar fashion, and being keenly aware of the necessity of life to continue even on the day of rest, the Rabbis interpreted the building of Solomon's Temple as an event “intended to create a set, defined space in which we would perceive *Hashem's* spiritual light together,” and then co-opted the logic in order to create the Sabbath exception of *Eruv*. (Yosef Bechover, 119) An *Eruv* is seen to incorporate the private residences of a neighborhood into one unified communal dwelling on the Sabbath so that leaving the home and carrying objects outside of the house no longer represents a philosophical/theological dilemma:

Jewish law says that Jews may not work on our Sabbath. One of the distinctive features of Judaism is that we get very specific about our terminology. One of the activities we define as *work* is carrying things around unless we are inside our houses or fenced yards. What things are we not allowed to carry around? Keys, purses, books, babies. In short almost anything. This, of course, makes it difficult for families with young children to get together on the Sabbath. So the rabbis decided that we could have a big "yard" that included many homes as long as it was properly enclosed and became one community

We use existing fences, overhead wires, hillsides, buildings, bridges, and a variety of other mechanisms that can serve to indicate boundaries. For reasons

¹ Please remember (in a few pages) that *beit/beis* is Temple in Hebrew and also Home—an important etymological connection for our current interests.

of getting along with our neighbors and to avoid vandalism the practice has been to make it as unobtrusive and unnoticeable as possible. In many places, the existing landscape and elements are insufficient for our needs. In those places, after securing permission from the appropriate authorities and property owners, we repair, upgrade, or add ornamental or functional elements. (East Denver Eruv Committee, 2)

Eruvin, then, enable individuals to experience previously unknown dimensions of form by reinventing the boundaries of the home, the self, the outside and the inside. By putting these spheres of existence into communal contact, an *Eruv* opens the literal and metaphorical doors of the home, showing borders and edges to be expansions rather than contractions of the self. At its most basic, an *Eruv* enables one to venture out of his *inner* and into the *outer world*—or, perhaps better, to invite the outer world-space into his inner home-space—when he otherwise would not be so able. Thus, an *Eruv* is a bounding that opens rather than closes, a border that enables going out rather than keeping in.²

The practical implementation of an *Eruv* is a highly complex, deeply technical procedure that involves the creation of an uninterrupted post-and-lintel-type border around a space or community in accordance with very particular rules. Generally, an *Eruv* is constructed utilizing already-present elements, such as light posts, telephone poles, building walls and other (mostly urban) elements. However—and there has been much discussion regarding the matter—the general consensus amongst

² This commingling capacity is indicated by the etymology of the word: *Eruv* comes from the Hebrew root meaning “mixture,” “disambiguation,” “agreement,” “to include,” “to be involved,” “holding together” and connects to the Latin *continuous*.

rabbinical scholars is that an *Eruv* can also make use of natural lines to form its borders, including cliffs, rivers (as long as they have discernable banks), canyons, significant bodies of water and other natural boundaries. Such features can constitute three of the *Eruv's* four walls, in most cases, as long as the perimeter of the *Eruv* remains intact.

II: Theoretical Implications/Function of *Eruv*
Eruv and Home: An Investigation of the There & Already-There

What an *Eruv* does, then, is essentially work to redraw the perceived property lines separating the inner (home) and the outer (communal) worlds. However, while it may be easy to misconstrue the action of an *Eruv* as being fundamentally inventive, the opposite is in fact true; what an *Eruv* does is reveal rather than generate. It does not invent space, but rather gestures toward its always being there.

By illuminating new potential dimensions of the home, an *Eruv* necessarily reminds us that every new home is in fact a second one, an extension of a first home (creation, the big bang, the divine, et al) out into unknown territory. In this way, an *Eruv* invokes the eternal—it reminds us, by opening the door outside, that there was

*something before this, something already here/there*³. An *Eruv*, as a means of arriving at a second home (*beit* in Hebrew is both the word for *home* and the second letter of the *aleph-bet*), harkens to us the always-unknown, the mystery, the preceding, the other side. As Sarah Gelbard writes in “Wanderer’s Sojourn Into Dwelling: Citing Diasporic Consciousness and the Other with/in the *Architecture of Home*”:

Beginning with the second instead of the first recalls the hidden but omnipresence of the Unknown who precedes Creation. The Talmud begins with *beit*, the second letter of the *alef-beit*. As the first Other, *beit* acts as an intermediary between the known and the unknown. Located at and as the beginning, *beit* represents not only creation, the separation of dualities, but that by which all was created...

Beit is Home.

Gelbard here illuminates a central concern for me in my own writing: I similarly believe that the *Eruv* of a poem (the mapping out new dimensions of the private self out onto the unknown page, and the sister activity of emptying the self [kenosis] in order to be filled by outside forces) is not in and of itself creative, but rather revelatory—not a generation, but a transfer of energies (like Olson phrased it: “A poem is energy transferred from where the poet got it (he will have some several causations), by way of the poem itself to, all the way over to, the reader.” And also Creeley’s “FORM IS NEVER MORE THAN AN EXTENSION OF CONTENT”). In other words, while an *Eruv* may create new borders for a place, the *space* the new *place* occupies was not created by the *Eruv*, but rather shown by it. In German, as

³ Creeley: “Here I am there/ You are”

Heidegger reminds us, the word *raum* refers to a place cleared or freed for settlement and lodging—yet the room itself (and I must also hear *stanza* here, too), the space that has been cleared, existed before the clearing: “A space is something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely within a boundary” (Heidegger, 1971, 162). Similarly, I hope, my poems don’t *make* anything, but rather show/extend activity and evidence of already-underway things in new contexts and co-operations. Like the poetry that leads to the poem (the energy of Olson’s formulation—what the poem picks up and moves), the outside that an *Eruv* opens onto is always *already there* before the *Eruv* exists—it simply remained out of eyesight, beyond perception. In other words, an *Eruv*, much like a poem for me, doesn’t create anything, but rather facilitates the transfer of things, the carrying. An *Eruv*, like a poem, is the means of conveyance rather than the means of production (which remains, at all times, hidden—hence the mystery).

An *Eruv*, by its very nature as a “mixture” or “fusion,” is allied to the concept of home, in that both commingle and accept the opposing forces of existence (inside/outside, beginning/end, known/unknown) into a collective field. Abounded by an *Eruv*, the inside and outside (public and private, sacred and profane, eternal and mortal) come into contact and exist simultaneously, jostling and agitating one another in an energetic frenzy (which is strikingly similar to how Robin Blaser discusses the activity at the edge of poetry in “The Practice of Outside,” as I will discuss in section III). In this way, an *Eruv* not only expands the perceived boundaries of the home, but

an *Eruv* is also characteristically similar to the home it expands, in that much like the space demarked by an *Eruv*, home also is a place where the opposing polarities of existence are brought into close community. This is what Gelbard calls the “the foundational Platonic binary tradition” that defines the notion of Home in Western philosophy: “[It] is formulated by means of (counter) relationships and defined boundaries.” As Gelbard explains, home in Western philosophy is known by the outside it is not, and did not create, yet to which it is unavoidably wed. Home is a paradoxical space that is at all times necessarily in contact with the inside (known) *and* the outside (unknown) simultaneously. This is especially true in Judaic mystic traditions, Gelbard explains, in which Diasporic wandering and the idea of a sacred original home are often housed (pun unavoidable) within the same expressive breath:

Since their exile, first from Judea in 586 BCE by the Babylonians, and then from Jerusalem by the Roman Empire following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the Jewish Diaspora have settled in communities around the world carrying with them a rich tradition of home and cultural identity. Regardless, the Jewish people are historically portrayed as a homeless nation...Yet, it is specifically this contradiction that is at the center of the myth. The rabbinical interpretation of the wandering Diaspora is that of a sojourn, a being on-the-way. By the-way, Home becomes the reinstatement of continuity between the seemingly contradictory dualities of existence—interior and exterior, good and evil, familiar and strange. Stability is established by continuing the dialogue with the unknown Other. The value of multiplicity located in the intertext and revealed by the exegetical tradition of *midrash*, is attributed to the very beginning of the *architext*. *Beit*, therefore, defines home as the relationship with/in the Other. Emmanuel Levinas provides a modern interpretation of this phenomenon, defining Home as the appearance of a place where the self recollects in interiority and simultaneously positions itself in a relationship with exteriority.

Whitman reminds us that a poem contains multitudes of opposing forces that are not contradictions; Blake similarly asserts that Urizen and Los *both* exist—that innocence

and experience are *both* in play at all times. Correspondingly, Gelbard posits that the home (and, I would argue, the poem) is a space of “continuity between the seemingly contradictory dualities of existence—interior and exterior, good and evil, familiar and strange.” It is precisely this “continuing dialogue...with the unknown” that unites the *Eruv*, the home and the poem in my thinking. Because all three are spaces of inclusion and exclusion simultaneously—all sites of calamity *and* embrace—the *Eruv*, the home and the poem all invoke mystery and disturbance. As Michelle Rapoport writes in “Creating place, creating community: the intangible boundaries of the Jewish ‘Eruv,’” “[the Eruv] becomes a ritual system that raises the question of whether it is designed to function as a mechanism of exclusion and separation or of integration.” Rapoport continues, providing a bridge to my next node of inquiry, Heidegger and the distinction of *place* and *space*:

Heidegger states that boundaries create space, not by enclosing places but by making room for and clearing these places. Boundaries are thus not a limiting force but a creative one: “A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing. That is why the concept is that of *horismos*, that is, the horizon, the boundary” (Heidegger, 1971, pg 154) The boundary—temporally and physically fixed or fluid—marks the point at which place and a consequent truth begin their essential unfolding.

Heidegger’s reading on boundary as that which enables presencing is similarly disclosed through a philological reading of the Hebrew word for place—*makom*—which is also one of the names of God. The use of the same word entails interchangeability between God and place so that each is a composite of the other...A bridge between heaven and earth, the sacred and the commonplace, is thus formed through the ontological passage from one mode of being to another.

In order to understand how an *Eruv* is not an inventive tool, but rather a lens through which the already-created (the already-there-but-unfamiliar) might be better seen or experienced, we must understand and adapt Heidegger's thinking regarding place and space. In simplest terms, an *Eruv* creates *place* but reveals *space*—a critical distinction, as Rapoport writes:

Space, claims Norberg-Shultz in his discussion of Heidegger, is defined physically as the precinct on which the material architectural object stands. Metaphysically it allows the revelation of truth, or a "setting-into-work of truth" about the world. *Place*, in Heidegger's view, is cut out from space through human experience and by the very practices of life; *place*, in other words, is tied to activity...*Space* becomes the context within which one is able to mark the boundaries that define particular *places*.

One unavoidable implication of Heidegger's figuration is that, to some extent, *place* must be understood as an imaginary construct—the result of human imagination or activity, rather than inherent in the world, like *space* is. But what, exactly, is the nature of the threshold distinguishing between space and place? An *Eruv* causes us to question what borders actually *are*—and what role perception plays in the creation and experience of boundaries:

What is the nature of the boundaries that delineate places and spaces? Need they be as Norberg-Shulz states, defined by nouns, substances, and "things that exist" to become tangible and fixed in time and in space, or can they, as Heidegger suggests, be "neither logical nor systematic, remaining subjective, tentative, shifting and contingent"? The Jewish *Eruv* [is] an example of a metaphysical, rather than corporeal, boundary that defines a space for religious practice and for the solidification of a community...The *Eruv* challenges the phenomenological claims that consciousness is oriented and directed toward tangible objects.

An *Eruv* “challenges the phenomenological claims that consciousness is oriented and directed toward tangible objects” because the boundaries of an *Eruv* can be fishing-wire-thin and essentially invisible—yet their metaphysical presence remains concrete. Because “the boundaries of *Eruv* are unique in that they rely mostly on remaining and intangible border markings that challenge...the idea that spatial experience is contingent on sensory impressions,” *Eruv* boundaries “augment and enrich our understanding of the concept of *border* beyond its inherent spatiality, binding it to human performativity, time, and the entrenchment of communal identity.” (Rappaport, 8-9) This feature means that *Eruv* are unique among sacred structures, in that whereas “the majority of sacred places, including houses of worship and historic commemorative holy sites, are fixed in time and space, acquiring their consecrated identity through permanent architectural features and tangible elements,” an *Eruv* works in a similar fashion without the reified construction. (4) In his writing on the Greek temple in “The origin of the work of art,” Heidegger recognizes that stabilized forms have traditionally enabled God to present himself to believers, to “unfold”; however, while certain qualities of the sacred may have migrated to physical features in architecture in the past, there is no necessary reason why sacred spaces in the present or future must be so concretized. Rappaport explains:

While the boundaries of the sacred may correspond to physical features in the landscape, Heideggerian *horizons*—the points where the earth meets the sky and are recognized by experience but can never be touched—can serve as boundaries of religious place as well. They generate a process of separation and adhesion and create “a gathering middle where an outlook on the world is opened up and set back on earth.” (Norberg-Shulz, 66) Through active gathering, place always entails

a ‘taking place,’ a ‘happening of place.’ In the gathering middle, defined by tangible boundaries or ephemeral horizons, the four elements of earth, sky, divinities, and mortals—what Heidegger defines as the *fourfold*—unite.

By operating at the threshold of “the gathering middle,” an *Eruv*, like a poem, is availed of exposure to opposing worlds, experiences and words—availed of not a single experience, but a multiple (*fourfold*) one. By existing at the threshold of the inside and the outside, the *Eruv* opens up the space of the home to all the manifold prospects of outside and futurity. And it is here, in this capacity to “contain multitudes” that I feel the most affinity between the theoretical apparatus of an *Eruv* and personal apparatus of the poem. An *Eruv* opens the home up to—and exposes the home *as*—wildness and hap the way a poem opens the self up to—and exposes the self *as*—wild meaning. As I will now discuss, what Heidegger discusses as a “happening of place” is remarkably similar to what Robin Blaser calls “the happening of meaning and language” in the poetry of Jack Spicer. Indeed, Blaser and Spicer’s work profoundly clarifies the ways in which poems and *Eruv* are deeply related, and represents a critical intersection for my own thinking regarding the subject.

III: Eruv and Poetry

Eruv and the Outside—the wildness of meaning at the edges of discourse

Bin Ramke once said that “Encountering the world *is* the work. Writing poetry is about reaching past and from who and where we are... We are trying to engage the

world, in some way—the writing *goes out to the world* and also *comes from it*.” The emphasis is mine: somewhere inside of what Bin said, my sense for how and why *Eruv* and poetry are connected has become clearer. Like a poem, an *Eruv* compels the outside into our inside, invites the wild into the tamed, evacuates space by opening its borders—an *Eruv*, like a poem, allows us to carry, and be carried, *outside*.

Because *Eruv* are inherently attached to outside spaces, it ought not be surprising that Jack Spicer and the “Practice of Outside” bear heavily upon my thinking. For me, one of the most apparent and significant connections between the writing of a poem and the construction of an *Eruv* is explicated by Spicer and Robin Blaser in their discussions of Spicer’s Outside. Blaser suggests that the Outside enters into the poem at the point where wild meaning (pluripotency) is allowed to proliferate, much like the unknown enters the home at the point where its definition is perforated by the introduction of an *Eruv*. In “The Practice of Outside,” Blaser suggests such a connection himself, discussing Spicer’s poetic activity of *kenosis*, or emptying, much like Heidegger discusses the emptying of a *raum* (stanza):

The dictation remains persistently of the world, and as it is unknown, it moves into the language as the imageless moves into image. Jack’s discipline of emptying himself in order to allow his language to receive an other than himself may be traced back to his tradition and sources, but he works there independently and fiercely. The discipline is intended to reopen the discourse. (Here I would place him among his direct peers—Poe, Mallarmé, Artaud, Duchamp in the emphasis upon loss of meaning turning into necessity of meaning)...

The haunted meaning wanders in and out of the poems. And it is a proposal of the wildness of meaning—a lost and found, a going and coming. It is harsh and

beautiful—and, as Jack would say, “scary.” It takes the question—who is speaking in a poem?—and changes it into a question of where he is speaking—from what place—in what order, what world—in what composition—a shadowy participant in a folding with something outside himself.⁴

“To reopen the discourse”...What I mean to say, then, is that an *Eruv* is a bridge to the other shore, the other side (of what? of *here*), as, in our better moments, are our poems. An *Eruv* opens the home to mystery, to that which was once believed to fall outside of our definitions; a poem opens the language and the self to the calamity of destabilized meaning. As Blaser puts it, the poem undertaken in the spirit of the Practice of Outside invigorates a “*reopened language* [that] lets the unknown, the Other, the outside in again as a voice in the language. Thus, the reversal is not a reduction, but an openness. The safety of a closed (tamed) language is gone and its tendency to reduce thought to a reasonableness and definiteness is disturbed.”

Following a lecture on his own work, in response to the accusation that he was more interested in truth than poetry, Spicer replied “Well, I’m interested in being a conveyor of messages.” It is that word *convey* that stays with me—not messages. Convey, as in, to carry, to assist in the moving to and from—such as is done by an *Eruv*. Somewhere between Blaser’s figuration and Spicer’s brutally honest reply, we must also recognize that the Outside has its own sense of things, its own ideas—and that they are of an order that predates and supercedes our own, much like a home (a *beit*) reminds us of the before-home, the already-here—the *space* that predated our

⁴ Blaser is later reminded of Pound’s citation in Canto XC: *the human soul is not love, but from it love proceeds, and therefore, the soul does not delight in itself, but in the love which proceeds from it.*

place. This is where dictation comes from, and this is an inherent part of my developing poetics of *Eruv*: by opening one's doors to the Outside world, one necessarily acknowledges the existence of forces beyond his limit, beyond his control. At least in the Practice of Outside, the goal is a kind of *kenosis*—an evacuating of a space, so that it might be newly infused and filled with fresh light. An *Eruv* is not different—it lets what was inside out, and outside in, so that the space occupied previously by the self (the home) is rapidly re-inflated by the buoyant forces of the outside world. The poem and the *Eruv* have likeminded interests.

In my book, *Eruv*, I seek to investigate the play at the boundary of the poem, the self and meaning in order to observe and participate in the simultaneously frenzied/becalmed activity of the edge. I am interested in getting closer to the unfixedness that lives in the peripheries of our discourse; as Blaser suggests, I believe letting words find their own value in the undertaking of the poem is a significant part of the activity that arrives us at the beautiful ragged borders of discourse:

Unfixed. A meaning in the poems is also constantly doubling back to meet the manhood and the ghostly, silver voices of it, where Death and ghostliness in [the] work must be seen, not as a choice against life or even a helplessness within it, but as a literal pole, where life is present to a point and then suddenly absent from an articulation. The curious thing about language and experience is that they are so immediately reversible⁵... Suddenly, in the contemporary

⁵ One is called to mind the telling pun at the end of Lorca's introduction to Spicer's *After Lorca*, written as it was from beyond the grave: "But I am strongly reminded as I survey this curious amalgam of a cartoon published in an American magazine while I was visiting your country in New York. The cartoon showed a gravestone on which were inscribed the words: "HERE LIES AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN." The caption below it read: "I wonder how they happened to be buried in the same grave?"

experience, the formal, public language does not hold and our language in the midst of a recomposition has to account for what is stopped, lost, loose, and silent. I am reminded of Merleau-Ponty's "wild-meaning" and "wild logos" which include an experience of a "birth meaning"...The meaning plays and composes before our eyes. This comes to be an essential aspect of the narration or a serial poem. (119)

I find myself coming back again and again to Mircea Eliade as I think of *Eruv*—especially his perfect articulation of the dual availabilities and presences that exist at the border. Eliade's thinking crystallizes what is so important to me about *Eruv*:

The threshold is the limit, the boundary, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds—and at the same time the paradoxical place where those worlds communicate, where passage from the profane to the sacred world becomes possible....The threshold, the door *show* the solution of continuity in space immediately and concretely.

(22-25)

I am interested in writing in the space opened by interruption—in feeling my way along the ragged edges illuminated for us in our moments of disturbance. We know that grief, as well as joy, can alter the experience of time—can, in a way, define its shape and boundaries differently⁶—and in *Eruv* I want to explore the apertures and gaps in meaning opened up to/in us by intense feeling. Finally, then, I wanted to write a book that exists on what Spicer called "the edge of necessity"—to write past the zone of my own comfort. I do not mean, however, that *Eruv* is a book of necessarily unfamiliar things. Rather, familiar things do appear in it—are its vocabulary, in a sense—but remain unmoored from the docks of their original meaning as the book

⁶ Hence "a mourning period"

takes place on the threshold of the known and the unknown, where the former ends and the latter inexorably begins. Put another way, my dissertation project lives in the moment between the lifting of my foot from the threshold of my door, and its landing outside my house. I want a poem to be like a home: an ongoing, mutable process of exploration; an ever-expanding sense of where and how we are with places and with others. What good is a home, a poem, after all, if it doesn't open upon the world?

“They seemed glad to get out of themselves, and as if unwilling to be brought in. I was sometimes tempted to stretch an awning over them and take my seat there. It was worth the while to see the sun shine on these things, and hear the free wind blow on them; so much more interesting most familiar objects look out of doors than in the house.”

—H.D. Thoreau

“But pretty much where you get lost is in the forest.”

—Jack Spicer

On the day of rest, carrying any object or body from one domain to another is prohibited by the Torah. An Eruv (Hebrew: *mixture*) is a ritual enclosure that opens private into public spaces, physically creating an intermediate domain—fashioning a larger home out of shared alleys and courtyards—thereby enabling transport from one world to another on the Sabbath. An Eruv is a doorway; without one, carrying keys or tissues or pushing carriages or letters would not be possible.

1

First Walk

Far edge of October and still no frost— converging wind patterns

reflecting across pond-reflected lilies
small clearing. Unsteady

.....
.....

of goldenrod

yellow light elbowing across

tall bushes

far-off voice

Afternoon opening into vacant lot— just a few thin sticks

surrounded by gold-tipped weeds and a small silver rainbird
streams across the scene—

all light sources *teeming*

.....
.....

Bright copper seed husks

organizing the field hush—

bright swaths of prairie flax catalyzed into shaking *dispersed by some* quick

shift of thistle outside fissure of rocks made visible

.....
...

Here/then ribbons past—

Gate-eyed in the clearing, I stand up and the whole thing's
invited—already summoning

struck beneath the greening
born again and again and all the time emptying

.....
...

Even in the gardens, the ripped sky

of jets passing—

Even in the way the spruces balk

as if they could touch them—voice saying

not mine even in water

.....
.....

pulled by the edges of a rock in the river *pulled from*

.....
.....

Back into vortices at work below the surface

oil-stained pocket of gravity

only perceivable by

convoy of its own swirling

enormous brown

leaves

going over the falls

can't just walk away from—

helpless pink flowers and attendant bees can't stop

sudden electric trees

Big-toothed maple

discharging

Thanksgiving
for M

I was happy, paradise
was a physical thing

Rhus

typhina dissecta

cutleaf

Rhus

typhina staghorn

sumac

.....
If I were dressed like

the sun
red-edge

gold-edge

Rhus typhina

and ground brown
and holy
edge

unscorched by tiller

Overwhelmed by the sight of
big-toothed maple
and cello

—at dinner

Big-toothed maple
and western prairie smoke
Hello

The girl and the world that does this to me—

Abandoned weediness
moved back into prairie—errant—weediness
wind in my mouth
everything starts to wild up

The girl and the world—*mud salt crystals rocks water*
helpless going over
the falls—overcome
by the feeling
if two people are kissing
they are doing it right

four chords
and blankets

four chords
and night

holiness or
numbness

holiness four chords or blankness

Here to spread light on

The lights turn the ceiling on

into goldleaf—all of them, makes me

a messenger—*each*

of these trees is amazing. I see

branches arc lightning, Lionel Messi on tv

and am convinced he will always be perfect—that bravery is

a girl in the park who could not look brighter. I ignore

only so much as I can handle—no such thing

as *more* perfect. We don't fall in love

just to cling—we open

all the windows. I had wanted to show you

before—a new lane of music

and walking off into the kitchen after. The sun

is fast laughter—long enough

to watch the windows change

into lingering street bells—*meant*

never to die—map only and archive

Arcady, the future, etc—brighter than

our mistakes. Like Prospero said

no harm done. No drowning mark

upon my soul. Bicycles just

heavens I hadn't seen—a whole

new planet orbiting. Literally

under orchids

twisting in the moonlight—that noise

small white petals in the street—one star

orchard

Sounds (second walk)

Slow example falling from cedars—

snow caught in a streetlight, *like it was breathing*—
sudden chill in the line

in *Sounds* this morning—

*To be the mast of
such great admiral*

.....
.....

and moved

out into the street

I watch the clumsy

grace of bicyclists in January

unblushing the sky, shamed of nothing

suddenly my life

makes sense: I get along

until the cloud just collapses—

I am standing on the freeway

and cars move by like drunk panthers

I am loved again

like there was future again—

in street clothes
take small notes

unfolding

chorus. I can't just

go out and buy a wheat-colored soul—an overgrown

path in the weeds behind the school

rough elm edges

affection rattled like a furnace

behind French doors—

Red
orange-red

yellow-red green—

I had wanted to be

a courtyard full of street lights

No cars, just the sidewalk when it rains—

makeshift forests

where there weren't any

yesterday—the kind of line

that lets you out into the world, the glimpses
you get when the wall shifts
to windows enough
for lights, Christmas
to stream by. I want to be
the picture of myself going out—
the sidewalk when it rains. These sayings
calm me down. Rooftop tennis courts
Ice-crystals, halo
reddish inner edge—
sun-stormy aurora—*aurora at speeds*

Dear Beings, I Can Feel Your Hands

*Small voice of my father saying
little piece of dirt facing
small boat harbor—*

On Tuesday, meteor

and then on

Thursday, riptides. Spouting

Horn—What *am* I? To be

the mast of such great admiral—

Sit down. Dear beings, I am afraid

I have lost my ruthlessness and cunning

along with a bay horse and turtledove. There

are flowers stuck to the ceiling. Seriously.

What have I near the water? My family

moves around me. I have decided

nothing (*scares* me). I look out across the water

and a spindly black spider

turns out to be a tide crab. Little sister

saying *that's a moth's wing*—up close

Set waves, tide

more like a feeling—my mother saying *look*

at how many people died while we were away—

Thin series of blurs

like I was never there at all

Like the other day I heard a woman

talking to her friend at the bar *I feel*

like I'm not good enough. I'll never make money

again, never fall in love. I don't know

where to go when the doors close—

I can't just go out and buy a wheat-colored soul

write a sadder poem—startled

by windows curved up in the shape of

fins. Up and behind my head

the shadows on the table spin

for us. We are in love—if I could

spend my life beneath palm fronds

into which walk little birds and saunterers

Clouds wrapped around iceplants if I could only

find *one* of the letters to God

in the street—I am still new to town

The kids on the lawn go around

the light. I don't get it. The first word

I hear on my birthday
is windowbox—charming of treetops
and songs on the radio
calm me down. Disarmed
but hopeful—*thank you*

I look up and
cathedral,
spotlight

Not having to
 imagine beautiful rooftops
—I find myself in that

§

And the feeling of girls laughing downstairs—
lucky enough just to scan the flights of birds
stand under bleachers in the snow
blurting out kisses—like a man

the cards kept urging forward

the world so rare it ripples

in the photos I develop, I tell the clerk *go somewhere*

and make yourself happy. All the lights in the ceiling

say *flood*. Make me happy—*feeling of*. I say

a feeling left of

windblown. I want to live

in a world where rooftop tennis courts

stay covered in confectioners snow stadium lights

on all the south-facing windows—world where

gates ajar rend my prayer

where

wren—

2

Door Out. Out

Feeling on the mend
Moving toward Shangri-La
I guess. I'll keep you
posted

—

Dear Cold,
Out. Out
I wake to the sound
of cars in my chest
Out. My throat, out. My nose
Out so that nothing that is not
Green can go out. Green out
and Green in—the trees outside my friend Kathryn
has said so many perfect things
I hardly know where to begin
some about her nose
some about heaven
The milky way paints a giant S in the sky

Anglers (So Soon)

Hulking
the way it comes at me
two quivering palms full
of pine needle, the need
you say they signify, the lack
the way we wrap ourselves up against—
If I had any say in this
I'd say *rolls in laughter*
earth's last plantation of happiness
sky, rainweed, the way the bead
of dew against my face has
to *do* with anything today
unties me, rallies
round energies
bourn by all your tongue is
born with
all the jackals of the heart

Your tongue that sits
astride numerous
fresh with
grove significance
shot through with
what comes to you
wastrel or champion
heart thing, those words
you get out
of my mouth when
the tin of primer tips
and we *all* jump back, just like Nathan did
because in my dream it's me
the explosion become syllable
the hillside, having suddenly to do with dresses
cleft-tongue of men and angels
a hardware store, an Orange Julius
stand next to a beautiful unfurled
I'm sorry I love you
Shot through with bone

It is the heart that hulks
kisses someone else
and I'm a white table in public, the way
water pours from a canticle into a glass
Alembic, I guess. The day you—
through me cold water
a front door
my friends and family finally
happy. Revelatory,
I know. Tellingly—I do. The day
you are up and delicate
I realize what you're up against—real power
of criminals, well-dressed

So talk to your grandmother, go
to the party with someone, go
to another—jumping across
pins on the ice—I used to
be the richest man in the world
so I know what's not mine

I know I've been gone a long time
but the future is love or isn't
future at all

It leaves me
watching ships disappear
in the rain, anchors dissolving
in my mouth, the overwhelming kind
of gratitude, saying hello
in and after the birds' noise, a star
so bright so red I think of the light
the way its job is already done
when it gets to us. What
family, what
gets us

Midnight Suns

No work anymore
in the glacier troughs
majestic stutter, tiny
bottle of Icelandic
vodka, and further
more impressed by
the originality of arctic foxes
real bravery, ice sheets—
don't know what to do with
 myself having never felt more
 lost and found you
and a door—let go, fall
for something else, to which
of the following
do you say yes? All
foreign movies, ice blond
and blue—the trees
aren't worried
about you, they're
trying to tell you
even in the gardens
 we get the idea
for fireworks
 from flowers
any aster, if it opens
 says something
beautiful, probably
 about a peony—*I was waiting*
I was waiting
 for you
to come
 to your senses

As The Sky Contained My Garden, I Opened My Door

If anything
 of the moment persists—
helpless, this grace
 that collects
at the edges—I *want* you
 and get free drinks instead,
open shirts, all from our old friends—
 I can't tell you how
much kindness means just then,
 what the look given is worth
and as such how disappointing
 selfishness—how we survive
our own sleep is a question
 but not tenderness
I see it in the hands of a waitress
 an always almost
shining thing—it's ok
 if you want to
let go, to meld
 welcome me
home again

The Disaster Takes Care of Everything

There is somewhere
the perfect you in a room
with no boundaries and full
of light—the torch
of chin, hips, thighs, throat
light—my hands
start shaking
smell like flowers
hours after the disaster
all resonant harmonics—traffic
padding down the shoreline, tanks
on the beach, still in my body
far from any collection of falling
for example airplanes or my—

I kept quiet mostly
except when I didn't, shuffled
the self around, measured faults
in my heart—looked for correspondence
in the meantime

what it means

carrying carry

mercy, looking

down at you through

the trees again

again saying *don't devolve*

into a lesser you

don't be base—

Adumbrations

—

Otherwise, everything was aces
furniture of future says
oncoming, stutter
that you are beautiful
have always been so
don't have to
listen to anyone. Listen
I like you, every time
you think, *as, in the other spring*—
amazed by the shockwave
one huge cricket makes
in my ears and elsewhere, clockwise—
how do you know when
someone is looking at you?
That electrician in your neck
30 and bleeding
—don't want to be that
money kind of confidence. Kept
a healthy fear of
the messenger. Underdog
some arena of
song, pushed through the radio
I need you, I don't need you
anymore

Page of Swords

So take care of yourself, learn how
to take better pictures, breathe
into your hips, braver please
give love credit for
the way I live
that *call me*
kind of feeling
frenzied, lupine
the card I draw
blushing in your breast
pocket undressing
freedom I know you
know you understand

Hymnal Oranges

Buoyed by a ukelele
my friend's beautiful
face on tv

—

Because as soon as we can read
our own nakedness, eden is foreign
to us—exegesis always already
baggage, the question of how
how we see changes
everything, oranges
for instance, the inscrutable meaning
of this instant. Danielle sighs
on Mardi Gras, not for the reasons
you might think—a day that means
at least two things
from here on out, a line from outside
that might not sounds like the eternal
verse it was to us when right
then *for it was for God so*
loved and disabused
not to perish, any whosoever
learns to say it
sing songs

Masada

We are all going to the same restaurant, we all forget our names, and the wind
will never be the same again—*so, yes: joy*

I repeat that I am not frightened
 turn my head back up
toward the last horizon, the letters
under the sky all hidden
meanings float down to us here
and our little wine-bottle lives, the light
between power lines, picture
where I was or would have been
thirteen years on the side of a mountain
or rather ramp there
conveyor—so sad
to see it all by the hands
of our loved ones and occasions
done—all the days I don't have
memories are best
so tell me I'm not familiar
any other part of now
and it's been here all along
the feeling, a lighthouse moved beyond me
of whom I am not fully keeper. I am outside
love I'll be lion if you be wizard

Door Horizontal

A magic house
 through which passes
breaching flowers right
where no one saw them
all new hours
full of passing and the birds here
are to be believed

Here
the birds say
everything
 winter trees
 if any o-cean

Door The Heart

Big guns again: no speakee
indeed. Moonmoth
and grasshopper still escape our page
while distraction, with its big black dog
the horizon begs—
Because we are upstarts
we are heaven. Because we pass with wings
in the hand. Moonstruck and grass-led
I dreamt all men dropped something
a little like their heart
everyday O their passing
sang

Do o'er

That howler monkey
is mad at the world. The whole entire
thing. This I do not believe. At Har Magido
there were only singing strings
among the date palm. At the end of the world
there is simply quorum
 of beast
followed by bees
 by a line that
at this fall
 beginning

Carivan Door

Because someone said
I like it best when
poetry or a girl stands
on the shore
arranging fire
in the corner
of my eye
—

A garden, a room full of bells
and voices. A way back
through trees I hadn't seen—
In the night wingless creatures take flight. Do you
hear me? In the night there are frogs
jumping through
all of our windows

Entropical (the bulk)

Out-stubborned
emotional sea-urchin
in the shallows (stabbed me) in the shallows of the heart
I'm the only one without a camera
which makes for difficulties, and the sun
you can't even look at it
even as it sets. I no longer have the right
to ask you who
does that look like? Do
these messages get through?
I know. I wanted to
tell you, right now
my dad is dancing funny
in front of everybody
by the iceplants
just so perfect so
I go out to the water
at the wrong time
don't talk for hours
think through it—only one answer
break up, diffuse
carelessly the heart
unto this wave that floats
the bulk, the wastage
left with

I, this hole in my chest, left
with weekends
emotional
fur traps, no good
reasons
a test, the affections
a thin freezing
twig of a man, someone saying alone
almost comically handsome, good
so long as I keep moving, so long
as my feet don't hit the ground

oat grass

globe flower

bamboo world

balsa wood

If I miss you like crazy still
not going to let it beat me. There
is someone calling my name
from the back of a restaurant
like woken from a spell, I should be
clear this is a love poem

3

Available

My heart's ukelele you
wake me up in the morning
turn hurt to tender
opening of empty
apartment cities in China
publish the body's instructions
light giant lives on fire
strange animal
calamity, fall in love
with the ground thaw, inopportune
sticking of the tongue, the chest, all
silent with someone living, all
our arms out here hanging
gravity on tree branches, our hands
hanging around

—does that
make me a fool? I want to be
copper tiling on top
of the oldest buildings
a sign that reads *love*
read it—a crane I like twisting
in the air I like people
which makes for difficulties

Touch, boat, deep striped camisole
when I read Williams
at the bar, I almost can't stand
up—tenderness at the elbows
pork belly tacos, flickering sweaters
rattled birch branches, bracelet
skin, the shape of a body in
heat steam, thin kissed by sun—ok
I give in. All undone

Standard

The day moon was gone
I wanted twenty good
photographs—transit, in my life
wandering axis, wobble of the mouth

I left

for gardens

made momentary by flowers
tried not to think of California
cracked yellow brick of sound
through the window—what about bravery
the inscrutable bounty
of fearlessness—storm systems—hello
warnings—birdsong I keep feeling
lightening—gifts in the park
sit outside as long as possible—undark
schedules—sound of air
syllables—I feel it as a train
and then dawn chorusing everything
new again

Radio Silence

Each part explosions
perhaps—for years
I coast on my tongue
let it do the walking
for both of us—unutterable
flutter in the eyes
uncross my lips and find
outside correspondence
of radiance I lost track
of rebellion an overturned
 begonia so unsure
if I will ever have a voice
 again
or not miss you
black hole crane
in my nest
just like that
it's snowing again
and April all now
I feel ensconced somehow
inside treetops
like something in the air was
different about me—a differently
than before. I start looking
forward to an open door
the thing that happens
next—the world
opens up, for the first time
I say *hips* and mean it

The Hum

Derail me
with chemistry and tinsel
I can't just go away
and quit, sort of
give up on it, my heart
if I could only find
one of the letters to—O
by now you get the picture
I left and gave up
music after, the towels
in my apartment, our old strata
& self-inflating baggage
—fuck it
I take a nap with all the windows
open in a storm
I want you to know
it can't compare
so why do it?
Black-out lettering, wedding
invitations, wet
pavement, enough already

Tattoo

Where I broke down and what
for—didn't get it
because I was scared
to get into heaven
and they wouldn't listen, couldn't
hear me, my ghost
voice when I say
anything—couldn't, didn't
speak with brightness, come
clean you know you
wanted this

Wake today a line

Famous from abrogation
—should have seen it coming
all along—commotion on the floor
—the wanting more
than bells in the street—foolishly
I am devastated
and wake and go outside
on my bike today. Wake
today a line. Getting home, I find
small lists scattered throughout
the house. Directions I didn't write
for future occasion—all by the light
and still somebody else has written *cultivate/exalt*
on the side of a blue dumpster
in an alley in the park

*O thought I! what a beautiful thing
God has made winter to be by stripping the trees
and letting us see their shapes and forms. What a freedom
does it seem to give to the storms!*
—D. Wordsworth

Rings

That voice inside
saying *universe*
from a big bag of marbles
is unsatisfying, so
we begin to wonder rightly
why the rings remain
such mystery, what that impossibly
huge hexagon over
the south pole means
or why we are nevertheless here
And in this sense the world
isn't leper, isn't makeup, isn't joke—here too
even when we can't see it
we know we feel something
skeleton underneath
more than overwhelming
casual whiteness
form or figure below this—when
we realize the canyons weren't cut
by water in outer space, we sense
a hand pinning jacket
to our mannequin
eyes, contouring so
softly even if we can't
apprehend the body
in fabric we read infinitely
small vocabularies in the veins
each ring of a piece, *almost*
not there, shining
event, evidence of—

Bromios

Radioactive wolves
imparadise me
ear, star, wild
if you're not already
naked then go to sleep. The parts
of speech are emblems for
spirit parts clearly. We both are
what and how we see

In Chernobyl wolves call nonchalantly
into our glowing night
sky again—nothing to fear
and less to worry. Even
reactors are reefs here—swamps
are swamped again and spread
out new miles in fans
around the city—*nothing in nature is
exhausted in its first use*
I've been trying—asked to
write what I wasn't saying
and crumpled
into a sheet in the marsh
paper linen then
washed up

This isn't a place for humans
(sign says
Something in me moves
handfuls of snow in the air, the trees
positively shiver—I hush
at the presence of a bigger
chorus than myself—wonderful
to get out of bed in the morning and the forest
isn't dangerous, the glowing rises

from the star in my chest. The forest
already in its infancy—frozen
or at least frozen to us
who anymore have no claim of it
more wolves in the shadows
of reactors we built. They float
over bare but unburned logs
and I never dreamed
I'd meet somebody too

Other mornings
fresh in the world
wolves weren't something I said
back then. Tried saying *wren*
tried anything sacred
still new to the occasion
and teathed with all shiny else—rustled
back to buttonless. Innocence
I'm afraid I don't remember
what I couldn't say—*orchard* probably
a thin beginning
beat-up truck today *amazing moves*
written on its side
no kidding I'd love to
feel lucky I know I say it

Transformations
on loan from the sun
not trying to look for
anyone else's stuff
always oracle
tidbits, daffodil
luminous hot middle
going to seed
resonant chamber of summer, grand
tour, open to the universe
west wind, breathless
given carry this morning
sudden prism through which

Grizzly Bear

What happens is, you
end up wearing it around
your neck like a star

 The stars
you see between
your antlers—the stars
in your chest. What happens is
you measure out tensions
left and right in the sunlight
and make for yourself a new home
You make for yourself a century
and leave it behind
attached to an animal
become real

Barnacles

What we hold on with, nothing
else—sirens corresponding to trees
attached to laughter through windows
 small animals
that carry in the scene—a dozen
angels each clutching something
smaller and bigger than the god
they call home
the way small shells are known
stuck to boats
at the bottom
moved so
every time I see you
in pictures
behind your face
is something magic
like an ocean, the ocean
the ocean's horizon

Portland

how I have forgotten
every dream
I learned
how I stop
thinking so goddamn much
imagination has
never made anything
but war and movies
and really you
just want to look at dresses

Spooky Action at a Distance (They Know)

Views meant to be breathtaking—I mean, built that way
what happens when I watch the new
Holocaust documentary on tv
Jackie says *no such thing*
as witness, I blur into a whiteness
we are the dreamer, the dressing machine
and there are thousands of us here. Membership
labor. As bigness eradicated nothingness. As
is nothingness. What happens to the pile of leaves when
on the doorstep of winter. The entropy stages
once-green things rolled away into waves
the process spread out across galaxies
or the parts of the leaf. When I see the unmistakable
shape of reef made into a small embankment of field
ground into dust by a rivulet of apartment runoff,
tendrils of a bigger tree. What quadrangles must be
marked by its branches. What happens to me
and quantum mechanics—I use my tongue like this. Things wild turkeys
know before they are five—*you have to be this close*

to the creature to understand. I believe myself entangled with
something, like globular superclusters. Explains my aesthetic
Why else do I start crying when I'm proud of one celestial body
Right this instant the sun exists
the full measure of which has yet to be reckoned. I have a dream in which Richard
Feynman
consoles me by insisting my mistakes are permutations, rough-sketches
toward an ongoing solution to no problem whatsoever. He quotes Thoreau
and vanishes. I am on a shore. I have made arrangements
it seems I was unaware of. A flash-bulb picture
haunting, in that everything
so shadow also—*as if the space between them didn't exist*
spooky in that
on loan from the sun
the only thing moving
faster than light is
gravity, love

—

I was in love. I moved faster than light. Love lit the spaces
between two bodies before they could blink. Then vanished
with precisely the same speed. When you call
to tell me, I'm surrounded by a whirlpool
of what does this mean

Two weeks (Jerusalem)

Let me try to explain—

It was daytime. For the most part. The city was populated entirely by city bus. It really was

something. Out amongst the screenprints and day lilies—

The lilies

momentary allez

till lilies became

reminders among the birdleaf

—I couldn't stay

Blackout

Night over asphalt—passages in the snow—night over asphalt just wanted to be a host—a place for brightness to pass over a million animals all crashing into a kitchen and breaking nothing—keep thinking: *God moves to the ends of our prepositions* like an open shirt—suddenly it's all leaky doors and thunderstorms like forgetting something—it's all green—and then a blackout everyone in streets

§

the wind that hit

those grasses

was an animal. I mean you

can see it

but only in patches. Only

by the yellow light

its teeth flashes off

I was driving downtown

when what I thought

was chandeliers

was sky actually
teethed on two sides
by exposure to buildings and trees
a new kind of world—*I believe you*
and it really is glorious—really
something else
Not the real but stuck to it
Not full, *shot through with*
light—if I ever stop thinking
this is a wilderness
pepsi can forest
in the tall rusty bushes
growing through steel dark
bleachers, echo of
somebody else's for-rent
whisper on the phone—if I ever
wanted to be this carousel
of night sounds—all I can think of
is I want to be an extra pair

of movie-set lights

I was standing in flowers

inverted by bell shapes

and suddenly everything's done

so forwardly—

4

Sedes

String lights strewn across
the underside of a still glass white
wedding tent—*that this*
isn't easy for me doesn't mean it isn't easy—a seat from which
to enter the world—thin rows of desert
flowers not giving up
red dirt stalks
all grown up
to light. They don't know how to go backwards,
why even try—

As much as you wish

we could be
a seat from which
with all the bravery
of Ely or Levi, or any
other angels of my
clear lillynight sky
we can be—I *know*
how much Hanna and the sea
changed me. The truth is green
things never really die—I
calm down at the sight. I don't
understand protest songs
in the street but know sky blue wool
with my grandmother is beautiful
in Israel—I let go, open up to
tantivy on rooftops, awake
as my name might mean, bent
down branch under tender
everything, so relax—
We go over the cliffs at last

Tranquillityite

A new real thing opening
to say just how important
a hair's breadth might be
all our unknowing
amassed near the sea, too delicate to live on the surface
so many things running over us
I think I cry as I perceive
blood in the minerals because
breakdowns are sort of like this, I go underground
or to the moon, and everything that touches you
 shatters me. Basalt
turns out to be home for what I mean. Crystalline. Whomsoever
says some rock knows what I see. Dear poetry
falling down on its face from above, thank you thank you shouldn't have
known it was enough—O good magic
and all my new scars, I promise never to regret
 ruining my shoes

dancing in the barn

Election

Why these classicists keep talking
about mediocre drugs
when I am in love
with a girl and a city
moved me one morning in Chicago
I choose you my heart
leaps to see every wish I made burst
through clouds and your face
in the leveling light just keeps getting brighter

Last Pier

There is a world in a world
in which we are perfect, every light
comes not from the ceiling but
behind and we are worth it—I stare at the eyelash
on my lens and listen to Jens Lekman, trying
to make a wish *and the sun rose over the city*
about love. Minutes before I leave
I realize what’s already done—through
the awning of straw, how could you
be more beautiful? You can hear new music
on the streets of Tel-Aviv
if you want to. Exactly
a revelation and so much more
welcome company. And then
I’m all mint leaves, white brick, steadfast
sun laughter in the trees
 *oh my baby—*To me
the stones in the street and the steps
of people passing stand lovely
as monuments to nothing. As a woman
at the table next to me asks
 what is this
“*conspirator heart?*” An animal midair
between sheets. A world
in which I have made mistakes
and we are all perfect—I call it every light
and the song “Cherokee,” *kissing me*
all better, ok, done already

Concordencia

O good shepherd magic me—
on the train on the other side
of the world everybody is reading
the news in pictures
I do understand, on the back of papers
a young man standing naked covering
modestly, although because it is today
he takes the pictures
himself and modesty
is staged. There is no snake. Breakneck pink
in the pastures screams at me. And so, poem, it seems
nothing has changed. A big show about death
glimpsed at speeds. How long until knowledge
crawls back out of its snakehole?
There has never been a single frame of this picture
not shot by the sun. Invisible green
trees chatter me—the news
is a one-legged heron, a foxhole
filled by need. I am left unattached
 O good magic
and all my new scars, I will never regret
calling your name out every page in the dark

Alembic

That feeling in your shirt
when the form assumes
all the leads
or the sun—at the bar
sudden glimpse of
some red dress
bell shape, slip
tulip, landfall

.....
Go where? Heart
and express—like a stoplight
green after overpass—everything helps
Later I don't remember your pink sweater
in the sky there was letters
in love all new storage

Swoon

Moving conversation

when you enter a room

your mouth can make

a sound of many wings

already ongoing

don't look

for me—how

could you

The leaves give the wind shape
to us, but are not
wind itself—the world started today
I can tell by the parade
and change into fireflies, streamline
toward the mountains
transmitted eye
pulling through the laughter
in the park—pianos start, some *thing*
keeping the swarm aloft
what sun—

The contour of some invisible green
in the trees
glamours me—you already asked
and are
already naked
so why worry? Almost certainly
others will tell you
to open all the sails
the windows or tables
glamour means me
unfaded new
territory

Saying I marry the magpies
they multiply
a sound like waking
along the fence line
no harm done
a way in which
something my chest pulls
forward

But really thinking about how you use
any opening in your day
to feel ok. Feel ok.
N and K engaged in the river today *so happy you're home in the morning*

Overturned blue wheelbarrow facedown in the mulch
—really happy just to see
moss-covered logs dipped sidelong into stream

Outside of law
for now. Flowery palm
outside my window begs
whiteness into my bedroom—can't stop thinking *can't do this*
undone, witness, swoon

Then everything through which you are better
is true—you are beautiful, small springboard
in the iris rhododendron hedgerows
looking for—well, fixing up
in the morning

Inside I live well—trying to be a picnic table
at Christmas, patient, ready for this—fitted and covered down. Wanted
to be polite, felt so wild—

Even when I couldn't hear a word
wind wind wind
when when when
green breath beneath voice then. Even when
you mesmer me
in the cantatas after trinity—still
What I hear is
Ward of
Become—*clearing*
evening— Roaring when
Ward of singing and
thank you

Wild, unruly at the mouth
Only ghostmen then
Asking ghost questions. Heal it how?
Go ahead and gather
Simple beings. Heave warren
Midlake, larken, dawn—and I was the bent
Morning, come home too, midwestern
Style. I always think
Hive when I see an apartment
Complex—what part is it
Of art when the light
Lifts off the wall
And into me? No visible means
Of support
 Like in September
I had felt and forgotten
Ocean

Every Blessed Thing is Elusive

And proven by the bluest bird
ever to alight, my teacher
singing unangered by
an olive tree
 unanchored
no auger for the ground
but sky
—

Unendangered at sunrise
the greenery is leaving filled
with seagulls and miles
of evening speak—ago. Ago. It's true
a short fantasia is best, beautiful
Dar brings me cava and I sit
by the fan in Reviva and Celia's. Tumbleweed,
with your fool hair
and good clean desert
I could comb nothing out of it. Nothing
that isn't already rowed and spun
and also sun. What plane
descending? What cloud keeping
pace? There is more
to shadows on the fanblades
than anything I have to say, so: Ago
Ago. The first time I understand
the word is in dreams—the first time in weeks
my face isn't broken by something outside
breaking me. Like, you
are beautiful, have always been so
why worry? Imagine
shapes slipping across shadows, like a shirt
thrown over your head—amen. I give
in. Thin tall and American
none of the streets here look the same

Found Well

Not forgotten just not there
white flowers
in a column, sea shaped *mar*
receding every morning
I stare, saying I am sure
something will happen

I want to be in love and all
the birds keep laughing
opening, opening
ongoing meaning touching
itself and going—*dear old Joe Ce-rav-e-lo*

Levi I think the heart doesn't skip
but leaps, sends off between
trees its beat and fingers
crossed hopelessly

And what do I want? Music
moved beyond me—the rock
and smell of a new home
than one I've known. I've never seen
sawgrass, meant more
than I do right now.
When I'm not looking
my beer foams over
and I call your name. I gently blow over
the corona. All white
laughter happens. All flowers

Desperados Under the Eaves
for w.z.

Save me
with caramel and cathedral
the wrong side of town and all
the curtains thrown back this year
all the way around

ice streams
lakes inner break
fall down into ok

Someone new
defending flowers
dragged behind the cart
at the heart. At a glance
I flash a look given as a kid
to anyone who didn't listen. I lost
my black hole crane, I guess, Warren
it must be a good year—must not have needed
the gravity anyway. I was in good company
deafening hours, companions, horizons, starting
the new year without remembering, every given thing
gone on into relief. Little holy rituals
carol right joyously into my heart, *and right now reclining*
little switches below the leaves make them start,
stop shivering

5

Dear Unimaginable

“What lay ahead was an unimaginable number 2
(counting beyond 1 is the adventure of vision), a light
at the end of what I was only beginning to think of
as a tunnel.”

—*Donald Revell*

i/

I thought I had to show you something golden

like the desert forgetting you

already see—I thought I had to

come home with heavenly

forms in my jaws

forgetting the losing comes

first forgetting free

ii/

—just like that. The world doesn't end, it hiccups. I break tea cups
in the kitchen till I feel better, listen to borrowed French records.

Dear Unimaginable, bruised and drunk under the sun

I say to you *what*

ever

iii/

I believe in a kind of—

Every story's dark
night in the desert. Or isn't.

There is a tea cup

on display

in rotation

in a field

iv/

Not forgotten, just not there. Last night the sky
forgot its fireworks, left them for us
Fear is funny you light its tail on fire
You light *you* on fireworks. Which is where
lost things go: nowhere: a book I found
someone else had written
which only I'll see

v/

I loved bad paintings, door panels, set stages. Then dumplings, dead rabbits and
heaven

I loved a quiver became a high-rise farm and rafters I tore

Tulips from the ground

Then nothing. Then

Tulips

vi/

Then for lunch I imagined a picnic
picked it from the ground
We're the only ones
in sight, make do with daffodils
and light arranged for us
all its alterable towers. Birds burst
from flowers

ix/

If I kill a bug don't feel bad as
if I could even
kill anything

a bug lands on me love asks will it bite

—

love lands on me asks do I want to build more beautiful furniture

move intuitively

through aisles and trails

wrestle the same surface—felt something of this

today without invasion. Talk less.

x/

Awoke to a note

you left: maps

are for places already

mapped what moves you

xi/

I want to be a step
ladder for summer, a letter
upon which climbs
the sun itself, once
ascending something launched
without end

xii/

a strip of color I could
cut my hand on a thin
tin brimming of light
across the world
upcoming next time
I want to be an island
where the moon grows ponds
over time
music through walls

—

If I didn't if I ever eryl think I couldn't

Xvi/

In new cities it's best
to look up. This morning I plucked
violin from tin cups
Violin air viola. Air
et voilà. God's dictionary
is no secret. Every landscape
a second lung

Xvix/

Thankfully it can't all be
up to me. Because I don't know
Disturbance,
like games—
like sun do not end
Hence sun sing so
pray / move yr feet

Xivix/

Unstoppable forward. Slowly lumped myself
back together—meaning was
slowly lumped. Then the afternoon was
a vee full of goose
Then another. I ran out
to a shout in the street
flying off red rooftops
where you were

Xxxi/

Wild eye of the heart stilt
caught in a tree—I try making faces
at the scene. Fences
disappear in a breeze—Gone in a shifting
huddle of birds, floating
reed of light in the bedroom. Next
instant the world

Xxxvii/

The sun gets past each tree
to tree. Birds are here
and there. I can no more stop
than start the peonies. Ever
is a greening gone in a sudden rush
of wind blown through
buildings full of paper
bags and of people

Xxxv/

A world a window opened

by a girl at a glance

and it's Christmas

train noise a distant

endless

sea hill swimming sea

—

What do you want you know

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