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### Eruv

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Eruv

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A dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities

University of Denver

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

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by

Eryn Green

June 2013

Advisor: Eleni Sikelianos

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Title: Eruv  
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Date: June 2013

## 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 divine<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

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<sup>2</sup> 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*<sup>3</sup>. 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 *Architexture 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

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<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

“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

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<sup>4</sup> 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 reversible<sup>5</sup>... Suddenly, in the contemporary

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<sup>5</sup> 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 differently<sup>6</sup>—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

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<sup>6</sup> 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. Unsteadying

.....  
.....

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*

---

Overtured 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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