

WGS - 1-2 poems?

Shadow (5)

If there is some divine shadow ✓
cast on every worldly thing
that could be a reason for rhyming
cirrus with feathers, wind with wing,
this mountain with the last one
and the next whose shadow

shortens, cast west
in a morning sun shaded
also by that raven calling
in answer to other uncertainties. Oh,
it doesn't matter what they say, the ravings
of a beleagured mind

sweep and scold, weakening
my resolve to climb, darkening to shadows
of clouds, without relief or thanks. So
much deeper, deepening ✓
are these slower bass winds
of great wings:

eagles in an opening,
turkey vultures over rocky slopes below
the relentless bluster and gust of a shallow
shrill echoing.

The bird to the wind
is ballast, a revenant with no mission

save to shadow
its own appetites, ravenous
as mine winging
like the torn map in my hand ✓
I'll keep holding up, flapping in the wind ✓
until the moment I let go ✓

with me ✓

shadow ✓
big ✓
wind ✓

Richter - penter
the "11"

Tea & Palaz of Hoon
Ord. Eng. in N. Haven

Sycamore Rev?

betsy@bradenprint.com
braden

Listening

Listening is less simply theft,
spread everywhere,
than talk. If I were to say
What looms at night into the ear

or into fear like bears
is only, by day, mere birds

rustling leaves, it might steal
any other listening away. If I said
to no one in particular
Digression is dangerous,

a kind of erosion of heading,
like birds, north or south,

would I stay to lift these miles,
foot after foot? The trail
is one bedrock, however stratified
with fissures of sound taking

flight upward through the woods
and me. *What was that?*

I couldn't say. Is it ^{even} possible
to have two kinds of hearing,
two ways to walk, too much
song in the hand?

this is great - the sounds

(me)

mixed met!

Listening

Listening is less simply theft,
spread everywhere,
than talk. If I were to say
What looms at night into the ear

or into fear like bears
is only, by day, mere birds

rustling leaves, it might steal
any other listening away. If I said
to no one in particular
Digression is dangerous,

a kind of erosion of heading,
like birds, north or south,

would I stay to lift these miles,
foot after foot? The trail
is one bedrock, however stratified
with fissures of sound taking

flight upward through the woods
and me. *What was that?*

I couldn't say. ^{even} Is it possible
to have two kinds of hearing,
two ways to walk, too much
song in the hand?

perfect

trail as metaphor

more concrete
sound

To stop saying —
to lose
need to say —
Poems have to tell!
all needs — !

kindness
Interpreted by questions
but not language —

How much have a little ~~how~~
power like this.
(can do!)

Leslie

Branches

By the time I get up beyond the trees
it's as if the branches

of my lungs are the kind of branches
that are trees

and don't breathe.
The more air that surrounds me

the less of it I take in—in fact
the closer I climb

to heaven, the more hellishly
like rock my feet become, as if

they walked on the ground
the mountain stands upon

and not the ground the mountain is.
I stop to let the sky

catch up to me and rest.
I love this earth,

how hard it works
to keep its hold on me.

YEAH

All For What

At last at the timeless summit
where it is possible to behold the great

distances of mountain upon mountain
skybound, I saw there

this lit and stunning, gem-bright
fly. It was a lone piece of brilliant

work to be here at all
and to be that green. But all

for what? After all to be called
green bottle, when instead

the bottle should be named for you,
lucid little mite. Just as this peak is named

for someone once thought grand
enough for the honor—

now gone for generations.
Having come to exactly here

of the ten thousand places between
every two insect-spans of space

in which I too might fit
my perspective, you suggest

I ask myself the same question.
All for whatever

small surprise I might find?
And when I arrived,

what had I hoped to be,
once larval and then winged?

Opposite

The mountain is the opposite
of breath. Solid earth,

tree roots, black bear,
eagle, trillium, birch:

inspiration
enough.

Greylock (MA)

As the path twisted west and east
I could see you across the valley.

You seemed miles and days away
but here I am barely hours later

on the other side of what I thought
I saw. On other,

even lesser mountains,
sometimes it seems to take forever

to arrive. I don't get the relativist
concept of the space-time continuum,

but I think understanding
has neither velocity nor mass.

I don't need understanding's assent
to climb. I just need to walk.

Duration

Duration is a mountain
that unwraps
as I walk it,
origami globe
where earth and feet
meet at the folds.

Perigee

I am my own perigee
picking my way around

every arcuate scar
in the hemlocked hillside

loess in the dust
making a vertical face

at patterns and intervals
I creep like a lost glacier

weathering to particulate
on the lookout

for a blaze
I'm afraid to find

the other thing
I want

some unmappable range
from distal to divine

here in the angle
of dip and strike

out again
winded and northbound

All My Life

Peak!—Where have you been
all my life?

After taking me all these years
to be here, now

I've heard everything
is illusion. Mountain,

if you don't exist
don't make me work so hard.

Lichen

What clings to the mountain is only change.
Those weedy trees? In relative time

they stretched those smaller excavations
of shrub and vine, in turn invited by weather

held in the tiny leaves whose stems
broke the backs of rock, digging

into fissures full of grass. And before
the grass? Seed, harbored by moss,

and before the moss? A fine skim
of sediment layered at the meniscus

where rock ends and life begins
with lichen, that slow dynamite that feathers

ledge with it spiny green self-sacrificing
mulch, its acid cache of wind's debris

that settles into a niche where then
the lichen dies, replaced by moss

which seeds with small leaves, growing
to shrub and vine, then weedy trees—

on the overgrown slab of granite and quartzite
once given the name Bald Mountain.

Quartz Spines

Here's where the wind has been, wiping
clean the mountain's slate, daily erasing

the granite with its rags and taking
away all the silicate it can carry.

Here the glacier ran, in flutings
scratched along the rim, rocks in the fists

of ice dragging by. I would have liked
to witness that migration,

to be nearly deafened by erratics
on their way through the Appalachians,

but even this ordinary wind's lift
wears me down. When I stroke the stone,

I can feel the parallel lines of hard quartz spines
left behind. This morning when I stepped out

onto open rock, I wanted something I didn't need—
a fear of heights, of exposure—to erode

and something else, metamorphic, to break
into the wind and cold.

Hiker Hordes

The mass movement of hiker hordes
is a kind of solifluction—

a mudflow of boots and backpacks
at the scarps, the soiled creep

of mileage subtraction—a human flowage
version of a modern Mesozoic.

What Is Left

Geology says earth's past predicts its future:
it's deductive, from the particular

to the general, a kind of planetary
behavioral psychology. My magma memory

and its consequences
have shown themselves to be less than stellar.

For instance, which was the mountain
with a second path for lightning

to be avoided, from which I chose the one
least frightening, and then regretted

not entering the trumpeting dawn?
And which was the one where I began

to descend through the silent pines
never knowing I'd passed the top?

If everything
is earth then I am earth, no less

than weather, no less than soil, nor the oil
of the long gone who walked on this

metamorphosed rock before me—
though I'll amount to less

than a fistful of cosmic dust. When,
back home, I grow

a peony or a carrot in some rich dirt
glittering with the grit of what it was, the plant's

fresh roots, like me, will cling to what is left
of what has left the mountains.

Why Trees Twist

Even while the spruce grows held
upright between gravity and heaven

it twirls upon its axis, a core that changes
year by year, though not in accordance

with the world's revolutions. Earth—
righteous and right-handed—rotates

eastward against space and time and all the living
molecules upon it. So when the tree—

blown by westerly winds and lured
to southern light—turns against

all reason clockwise there are so many
conflicting forces—Coriolis Effect, the left-

leaning bias of being, the sun's seeming circle
across the forest—at work that even the tree

must exert its own orbit. How then could I
keep anything straight? This one, fallen, stripped

of bark, cracks apart, split across its concentric
rings into spokes like wheels or webs

that spiral upward through the trunk.
Such deflection seems a crucial labor, the kind

that conspires to belie the calm
I feel in these ancient woods. Once

upon a time, when this universe exploded
from some elemental cloud

whose collapse turned everything
to spinning, we became the wound

unwinding. And still
we twist in the blast of its momentum.

Peace

We've all seen it—the lifeless
creature in another's jaws
who, if suddenly released, springs

at once as if from death and runs for its life.
I've heard that soldiers too,
beyond the brink

of suffering forget to feel pain. Between
the face of violence and the threshold of awe,
it's a blessing

of biology or God, which—
I don't know—may be one
and the same. Unwitnessed,

it happens every day,
the shepherding of fur into beak,
bone into dust. Today

it was the mouse who surrendered to an owl,
its life spilling like blood from its body
into the body of life. What I saw

was that—in advance of death—
in giving itself up
it gave itself

the gift that only by that singular force
can be given
or got.

Lost in Thought

When I walk
lost in thought

the trail goes on
unwinding

like a flicked ribbon
one long brown strip

between growth
and stone

a blur of trees
the flies and bees

crisscrossing
just ahead of me

like a vague idea
of welcoming

and I am like the stream
sunk into the mountain

or the mountain
reflected in a cloud

which is like a thought
which is lost on me

Chestnut Blight

Early in spring no deciduous leaves have yet reached
any beech or oak up here on the mountain. Like me,

they climb the Blue Ridge a hundred feet at a time.
In the cold air, I beat them to the top and look east across

the valley, down to where pale leaves spread green
and wide like another new and sudden range

of hills below. Where I walk, chestnut trees,
eighty years dead, spook the forest floor, fallen

into a grayish pallor, as if by some strange curse
they can neither grow nor decompose. They lean

like their own tombstones, and those of homesteaders
who used and sold their bark for the tannin that now cures

the wood but doesn't revive it, so it ages but can neither
live nor decay. Every year fresh stump sprouts begin

again from still-living roots, innocent of the blight
whose fungal spores will take them. This undying

effort at renewal will go on and on—the eerie
preservation of what remains in the forest of life and death,

of parasites lying in wait, the new golden leafing out
of branches again as spring and I rise

like saplings, like mountains out of valleys,
uphill to the summits, into summer.

Shadow

If there is some divine shadow
cast on every worldly thing
that could be a reason for rhyming
cirrus with feathers, wind with wing,
this mountain with the last one
and the next whose shadow

shortens, cast west
in a morning sun shaded
also by that raven calling
in answer to other uncertainties. Oh,
it doesn't matter what they say, the ravings
of a beleagured mind

sweep and scold, weakening
my resolve to climb, darkening to shadows
of clouds, without relief or thanks. So
much deeper, deepening
are these slower bass winds
of great wings:

eagles in an opening,
turkey vultures over rocky slopes below
the relentless bluster and gust of a shallow
shrill echoing.
The bird to the wind
is ballast, a revenant with no mission

save to shadow
its own appetites, ravenous
as mine winging
like the torn map in my hand
I'll keep holding up, flapping in the wind,
until the moment I let go.

Updraft (Mt. Moosilauke, NH)

I climbed the heavy miles of rock
 hot through the forest up
 to the gravel avenue through the krumholtz
 the heat now descending to cooled tundra
 paved with tiny wildflowers
 yellow and white and green
 strawberries twisted among miniature ferns
 under the bonsai-like spruce trees
 the path here a portal through the laws
 of gravity to the next height opening
 clear ahead like an oncoming
 hypnosis of space or surrender of weight
 till finally into sky light above tree line
 I rose I rose
 and I was on a green cloud flung wide
 with more mountains spinning
 in every distance I was held aloft
 hovering on the updraft between them
 or I was the updraft I was
 awake arisen
 like the raven with its wings
 spread far and floating
 fast in place on a mountainous
 rapture of air or I was the air —
~~(and like)~~ the hand of air
 turned intangible
 as I moved and breathed

Where I am

where am I / where was I

Where I am is always
in relation to a mountain—
for now
a feature in geologic time—exactly
where I am is in relation
to the tender

tapering of branches—
in relation to receding roads—
to be here ~~imagining~~ *where I am* in relation to
the unimaginable enormity of one
universe—the minute

formation of rock and volcano—
glacier and range—and the undoing
of root and ridge and synthesis—
and the wherewithal
of a sky

with untold tons of weightless
burdens on its back—
all the stars—all the bees *A + hives* —

all thoughts and suns exploding—
the ^{and} unsung debts
of locusts and light years and tides—
the collisions of dust and rain

with farmlands and seas—

to be here where I am
in relation to these—is to replace
me—is the exact

point [is exactly/the point]
[of my exhilaration]

*with the exact
point
of my exhilaration*

Where I am

Where I am is always
in relation to a mountain—
for now
a feature in geologic time—exactly
where I am is in relation
to the tender
tapering of branches—
in relation to receding roads—
to be here imagining
the unimaginable enormity of one
universe—the minute
formation of rock and volcano—
basin and range—and the undoing
of root and ridge and synthesis—
and the wherewithal
of a sky
with untied burdens on its back—
all the stars—all the bees and hives—
all thoughts and suns exploding—
the unsung debts
of locusts and light years and tides—
collisions of dust and rain
with farmlands and insects and coasts—
to be here where I am
in relation is exhilaratingly to replace
me—is exactly
the point

Hurricane Moths

Hauled up from the depths of ~~ground~~ ^{earth}
 like an exhumed grave,
 with their massive skull-like rocks
 and dark unburied soil
 heaved and dragged to vertical
 walls, these pallid roots remain
 true to their windsheared trunks.

When they ~~thundered~~ ^{these trees} to the ~~earth~~ ^{ground},
 most likely no one heard ~~them fall~~ ^{the trees fall}—at least not in any way
 distinguishable from the blood-beating pound
 and crash made by such ferocity
 of murderous wind and rain.

But as if a medium murmured from beyond

~~the grave~~ ^{our ken}, news of the freshly risen
 peat, strange and rich with ~~its~~ damp promise,
 reaches a thousand moths
 whose ghostly wings, as I pass, pulse
 in the color of shadow, having hatched
 to shades of a daylight dimmed
 by leaves of other trees ~~left standing~~ ^{one for now—}.

left—and, for now, left standing

Keene - Lang. p. 2

~~not in~~

In my room, the world is beyond my understanding;
But when I walk I see that it consists of three or four hills and a cloud

—Wallace Stevens, from "Of the Surface of Things"

#3
Thu May
2012

poems for Deming (20)

start → language
Keep Moving
Light wakes
Water

divide - all 3 have
part ending statements

geology

~~(Steep)~~

~~(Distant)~~

going on

~~(not Laurel)~~

- ✓ Not one
- ✓ Lost track
- ✓ All for what
- ✓ Branches
- (opposite)
- ~~(gray)~~

✓ all my life

~~(Distant)~~

penzance

where left

✓ kitchen - change end? "where"?

♀ exper -
geol
animals
plants
people

Definitely need to
go back to solids -
Concrete yhs of
the trail (see above
list) - think
Ground - Path - Fr

← ~~Hiker Hikes?~~

Quartz spms

Why trees twist

~~Scree~~

Lost in th

Chestnut - as spring & I rise

end → Shadow

Listening

Listening is less simply theft,
spread everywhere,

than talk. If I were to say,
What looms at night into the ear

or into fear like bears
is only, by day, mere birds

rustling the leaves,
it might steal another listening

away. If I said, even to no one,
Digression is dangerous,

a kind of erosion
of heading, like birds, north or south,

~~but it be impossible~~
would I stay to lift these miles,
foot after foot? The trail

is one bedrock, however stratified
with fissures of sound taking

flight upward through the woods
and me. *What was that?*

I couldn't say
if there are two ways to hear,

two ways to walk, two
songs in the hand.

use the word impossible
somewhere above

The impossible trail? would/could?

Hm -

I never say hear (except there)

I say listen 3 times, then.

Could there be - if it poss
to have 2 kinds of hearing &
2 ways to walk, for
much song in the hand?

I like the (?)

much singing in the hand
need 2 syl.

kinds of hearing

I like the (?)
but

✓

Keep Moving

Keep moving till after.
That's what I tell myself.

Also that the moving becomes the after
moved, even loosened

to a fault. I want to feel
tectonics do the work.

Later: something blue or green or pooled
may be emptied or erupted

like the fold and thrust of crust
that got me into this mess.

Lava hardens.
Water erases its tracks.

Footfalls on rocky ground
leave no record in print.

Maybe the places I've been
are still there. Maybe I'm a trace.

Hawks scoop by, hungry.
There are plenty of mosquitoes to go around.

✓

Light Wanes

As the light wanes,
these igneous origins melt me down

into prehistory. Are we ~~almost~~ there yet?
Little prairies on summer domes

bloom like snowglobes inside out,
abrupt, azonal, an excitation

of groundswell and I am borne along
alive as I know how.

In camp, collecting wood for a fire
gets harder as the season flares on;

all the fallen trees get used up.
Storms

will bring more down to earth.
I sleep like a bridge

between the busy, curious creatures
and the indifferent rock

whose working days are over.
It's all about the weather

and the time of day now.
Then I wake up and the sky

breakfasts with me, bird-pricked, cold.
Morning was born to travel.

✓

m

Water

Water is the great reshaper—
but I know you know that.

In this deluge I am weathering
like a mountain, but not

like a mountain. Beyond a narrow range
of cold and damp

between mist and drip I slip
into my zone of leaching

where—brim-dipped, steamed
in drench—flesh

becomes another kind of mud
semi-solid, landslide.

Though I wrinkle, I am not you,
mountain, chevron-sided.

The horizon of my skin's as lost
and steeped in fog as the rim

of this new precipice. I inch
into golem, clay baby,

saturation zone. I am sure
your view is spectacular.

Language

Each mountain is a new romance
language, sharing a few cognates

and roots. I climb the mountains
to misunderstand the real again,

to speak in tongues
of igneous and sediment, intrusions

of granite in the vowels. To travel
the trail is to reinvent the wheel

of what I've known, whatever I meant
by *here*. No longer fluent, breathing

comes hard and deep, resists
limit and lung, mouths a translation

from leaving to return. I begin
disbelieving again, unbalancing

and rebalanced by the sounding out
of other names for *home*.

✓
geology ?
Dictionary ✓

When I am done walking
I will look up

the definition for geology—
the word of earth—

in a dictionary without angles or sides
that maps the peaks and valleys

of somewhere I've never been. What of
these spells of breeze and weight,

the hesitance given to the climb,
the involuntary hurry of descent

will not last? Down
come the small pebbles

following in the footsteps
of early boulders, glacial till, one rock

in the crevice
of my boot. If it's the force

of friction that holds things close
to the mountain, it is

the forces of gravity and time
that send them away. Can I

account for the kind of repetition
not to be mistaken for infinity?

Could I forget this
exact spot where today I beheld

the clear light bending through clouds,
the constant

coincidence of meeting my loneliness
in the same place as my joy?

Steeper

The steeper the mountain
the more in my face

it is. *Look at me, look at me,*
it commands, jealous

of horizons, sidling, and it's true
I can't take my eyes

off it for one second
until it finally lets up

and we can both surrender
to a longer view.

✓

47

Distances

Two mountains as I approach
seem to touch, attached

at their forested sides, but then
the nearer I get to one

the farther the other recedes:
some optical illusion

come-on and stand-off,
half embrace, half fling.

I'm up for some time
to be close,

down with time
far flung.

Intimacy, tease, mountains,
me—I walk

for the love of the near
and of distances.

On Glassy Mountain

Here where the only way to go on
is to turn back,

along the sides of the ancient dome,
pine needles,

countless as raindrops,
lie now in crescent

thresholds between open rock
and undergrowth,

and the once-living
then windblown

needles now stilled on the ground
in rusted brown, gather in the same form

as last night's storm clouds against the sky,
and storm water—

calmed in the bowls of stone—
curves the same way

as ponds in the hollows between hills,
and those concave bowls

are the mirror image
of the granite dome that holds them

up to the sun,
reflecting today—

as for eons between rainfalls—
its light across the valleys.

✓

Going On

Here where the only way to go on
is to turn back

along the sides of the ancient dome
pine needles

countless as raindrops
lie now in crescent

thresholds between open rock
and undergrowth

and the once-living
then windblown

needles now stilled on the ground
in rusted brown gather in the same form

as last night's storm clouds against the sky
and storm water

calmed in the bowls of stone
curves the same way

as ponds in the hollows between hills
and those concave bowls

are the mirror image
of the granite dome that holds them

up to the sun
reflecting today

as for eons between rainfalls
its light across the valleys.

✓
Mountain Laurel (CT)

On the wet and shoulder-wide
shining leaf-padded path

between close petal-scents
floating and faint as mist

and the deep drip of water
shushing my boots in the slick,

I rounded a turn and saw
a wide and colorless lack of woods

arisen, white, off the forest floor,
nothing but

some enormous pale dome ahead—
boulder? sky?—slowly become

one vast cloud of bloom. In the rain
flowers were all that was not rain,

flowers were the bowed
hosts of rain that made of rain a crown.

✓
Not One

Not one mountain
but mountains

Not one fern but ferns
a field of fern

a flock of birds
a forest of trees

not you but you
not I

Apple trees stood as far
as I could see for miles

Mr. Conklin was there, no one
else I had to climb

that last boulder tumbled
off the cliff to yet another peak

It was dark
but I had some idea of it

There are some places
where one cannot see

to something not built
the appearance of utility

of things will be a mountain top
while you try to hold it

as the night you go
and you don't know what else

that one can
that would feel as much like flying

✓
Lost Track (Killington, VT)

Without counting
the repeating leaves of maples

or the endless needles of pines
I lost track

of time and stones
long since handed from field to wall

replaced the overplayed
chatter in my mind.

Apple trees stood aside
as I passed uphill for miles.

No one else was there, no one
said I had to climb

that last boulder tumble
off the trail to yet another peak.

It was steep
but I had come this far.

There are some places
where time trances away

to something not unlike
the opposite of infinity

or stands still on a mountain top
while you try to hold it

while it lets you go
on and you don't know what else

~~you~~ you can do
that would feel so much like flying.

I ?

✓
All For What [some mt named for someone special]

At last at the timeless summit
where it is possible to behold the great

distances of mountain upon mountain,
skybound, I saw there

this lit and stunning, gem-bright
fly, a lone piece of brilliant

work to be here at all
and to be that green. But all

for what? After all to be called
bottle green, when instead

the bottle should be named for you,
little mite. Just as this peak is named

for someone once thought grand
enough for the honor—

now gone for generations.
Having come to exactly here

of the ten thousand places between
every two insect-spans of space

in which I too might fit
my perspective, you suggest

I ask myself the same question.
All for whatever

small surprise I might find?
And when I arrived,

what had I hoped to be,
once larval and then winged?

(What's it
really called?)

✓

Branches

By the time I get up beyond the trees
it's as if the branches

of my lungs are the kind of branches
that are trees

and don't breathe.
The more air that surrounds me

the less of it I take in—in fact
the closer I climb

to heaven, the more hellishly
like rock my feet become, ~~as if~~

and
they walked on the ground
the mountain stands upon

and not the ground the mountain is.
I stop to let the sky

catch up to me and rest.
I love this earth,

how hard it works
to keep its hold on me.

Opposite (CT)

The mountain is the opposite
of breath. Solid earth,

tree roots, black bear,
eagle, trillium, birch:

inspiration
enough.

Greylock (MA)

As the path twisted west and east
I could see you across the valley.

You seemed miles and days away
but here I am barely hours later

on the other side of what I thought
I saw. On other,

even lesser mountains,
sometimes it seems to take forever

to arrive. I don't get the relativist
concept of the space-time continuum,

but ~~I think~~ understanding
has neither velocity nor mass.

I don't need ^{the} understanding's assent
to climb. I just need to walk.

All My Life

Peak!—Where have you been
all my life?

open taking
It took me all these years
to be here ~~and~~ now

I've heard everything
is illusion. Mountain,

if you don't exist
don't make me work so hard.

Duration

Duration is a mountain
that unwraps

as I walk it,
origami globe

where earth and feet
meet at the folds.

Perigee

I am my own perigee
picking my way around

every arcuate scar
in the hemlocked hillside

loess in the dust
making a vertical face

at patterns and intervals
I creep like a lost glacier

weathering to particulate
on the lookout

for a blaze
I'm afraid to find

the other thing
I want

some unmappable range
from distal to divine

here in the angle
of dip and strike

out again
winded and northbound

What Is Left

Geology says earth's past predicts its future:
it's deductive, from the particular

to the general, a kind of planetary
behavioral psychology. My magma memory

and its consequences
have shown themselves to be less than stellar.

For instance, which was the mountain
with a second path for lightning

to be avoided, from which I chose the one
least frightening, and then regretted

not entering the trumpeting dawn?
And which was the one where I began

to descend through the silent pines
never knowing I'd passed the top?

If everything
is earth then I am earth, no less

than weather, no less than soil, nor the oil
of the long gone who walked on this

metamorphosed rock before me—
though I'll amount to less

than a fistful of cosmic dust. When,
back home, I grow

a peony or a carrot in some rich dirt
glittering with the grit of what it was, the plant's

fresh roots, like me, will cling to what is left
of what has left the mountains.

Lichen (Bald Mt., CT)

What clings to the mountain is only change.
Those weedy trees? In relative time

they stretched those smaller excavations
of shrub and vine, in turn invited by weather

held in the tiny leaves whose stems
broke the backs of rock, digging

into fissures full of grass. And before
the grass? Seed, harbored by moss,

and before the moss? A fine skim
of sediment layered at the meniscus

where rock ends and life begins
with lichen, that slow dynamite that feathers

ledge with it spiny green self-sacrificing
mulch, its acid cache of wind's debris

that settles into a niche where then
the lichen dies, replaced by moss

which seeds with small leaves, growing
to shrub and vine, then weedy trees—where? >

On the overgrown slab of granite and quartzite
once given the name Bald Mountain.

Hiker Hordes

The mass movement of hiker hordes
is a kind of solifluction—

a mudflow of boots and backpacks
at the scarps, the soiled creep

of mileage subtraction—a human flowage
version of a modern Mesozoic.

Quartz Spines

I can see where the wind has been, wiping
clean the mountain's slate, daily erasing

the granite with its rags and taking
away all the silicate it can carry.

Here is where the glacier ran, in flutings
scratched along the rim, rocks in the soles

of ice dragging by. I would have liked
to witness that migration,

to be deafened by erratics
on their way through the Appalachians,

but even this ordinary wind's lift
wears me down. When I stroke the stone,

I can feel the parallel lines of hard quartz spines
left behind. This morning when I stepped out

onto ~~this~~ open rock, ^{I wanted} something I didn't need—
a fear of heights, of exposure—~~eroded~~ ^{to erode}

and something else, metamorphic, ^{to break} broke
into the wind and cold.



On What We Can Do Before It's Too Late

How can we cross a field,
dewless from a long and cloudless day,
if we have not yet entered the field
or the day? Still in the woods,
I try to imagine the field ahead, its flush
of birds from the grasses, its seventeen
species of wildflower—iris, daisy, lace—
and try to taste the heat in my throat
as I walk through the piercing
tinnitus of cicadas. I want the field
to be so real I feel the sharp
embedding of a tick's teeth
in my wrist, I want the field
before it exists
or not at all. Because I know
my father will die and until then what
can I do before it is too late? Only
walk beside him and hold his hand,
which has a particular feel—
of dryness with a kind of river inside it—
and always has, while remembering
the way that he held mine?
Where is the field
between the forests of imagine
and know—where is the field I will be
crossing when I walk alone
without him, only remembering
his hand?

Why Trees Twist

Even while the spruce grows held
upright between gravity and heaven

it twirls upon its axis, a core that changes
year by year, though not in accordance

with the world's revolutions. The earth—
righteous and right-handed—rotates

eastward against space and time and all the living
molecules upon it. So when the tree—

blown by westerly winds and lured
to southern light—turns against

all reason clockwise there are so many
conflicting forces—Coriolis Effect, the left-

leaning bias of being, the sun's seeming circle
across the forest—at work that even the tree

? ^{exerts} must exert its own orbit. How then could I
keep anything straight? This one, fallen, stripped

of bark, cracks apart, split across its concentric
rings into spokes like wheels or webs

that spiral upward through the trunk.
Such deflection seems a crucial labor, the kind

that conspires to belie the calm
I feel in these ancient woods. Once

upon a time, when this universe exploded
from some elemental cloud

whose collapse turned everything
to spinning, we became the wound

unwinding. And still
we twist in the blast of its momentum.

Peace

We've all seen it—the lifeless
creature in another's jaws

who, if suddenly released, rises
at once as if from death

and runs for its life. Soldiers
too, or so it's said, ^{brink} at the brink

of suffering forget to feel pain.
In the face of violence it's a blessing

of biology or God, which—
I don't know—may be one

and the same. In any case—
it happens every day, unwitnessed,

the shepherding of fur into feather,
bone into dust—I saw this day

the mouse surrendering to the owl,
its life ^{spilling} like blood from its body

into the body of life
so that in giving itself up ^{in advance of death—}

it gave itself
what can only be given

or got by the patient force
of faith. [I don't have to know.]

the science of faith

Peace

We ⁱⁿ have all seen it—the lifeless
creature in another's jaws

who, if suddenly released, ^{springs} rises
at once as if from death

and runs for its life. Soldiers
too, it is said, beyond the brink

of suffering forget to feel pain.
In the face of violence

it's a blessing
of biology or God, which—

I don't know—may be one
and the same. In any case, ^{unwitnessed}

it happens every day, ^{unwitnessed}
the shepherding of fur into ^{beak} feather,

bone into dust. ^{today I saw} I saw this day ^{watched}
the mouse surrender to the owl.

Its life spilled like blood from its body
into the body of life

so that—in advance of death—
in giving itself up

it gave itself ^{by a singular force}
what ^{whether or not we know it}

what can be given
or got

by the patient force ^{of faith}
of faith

unquestioned knowing

surrender

knowing

(serenity)

whether knowingly
whether by the ^{single} patient force
of instinct or of faith [knowing]

this time it was mouse
surrendering to owl,
its life spilling from its body

What I saw was that... in giving...
it gave itself...

Lost in Thought (nameless mt N of Loft Mt, VA)

When I walk
lost in thought

the trail goes on
unwinding

like a flicked ribbon
one long strip *of brown*

between growth
and stone

a blur of trees
the flies and bees

crisscrossing
just ahead of me

like a vague idea
of welcoming

and I am like the stream
sunk into the mountain

or the mountain
reflected in a cloud

which is like a thought
lost on me

Chestnut Blight

Early in spring no deciduous leaves have yet reached
any beech or oak up here on the mountain. Like me,

they climb the Blue Ridge a hundred feet at a time.
In the cold air, I beat them to the top and look east

across the valley to where pale leaves spread green
and wide like another new and sudden range

of hills below. Where I walk, chestnut trees,
a hundred years dead, spook the forest floor, fallen

into a grayish pallor, as if by some strange curse
they can neither grow nor decompose. They lean

like their own tombstones, and those of homesteaders
who used and sold their bark for the tannin

that now cures the wood but doesn't revive it, so it ages
but cannot go. Every year fresh stump sprouts ~~stem~~ spring begin ~~born~~

from still-alive roots, innocent of the blight
whose fungal spores will take them down. This undying

effort at renewal will go on and on—the eerie
preservation of what remains in life and death,

of parasites lying in wait, the new golden leafing out
of branches every spring as spring rises

like saplings, like mountains out of valleys,
uphill to the summits, into summer.

keep green these

can't decay,
again

preserve
decay

no breaks?

Shadow

some diving
If it's true that God's shadow
is cast on every worldly thing

dis me

son
that could be the reason we can rhyme
cirrus with feathers, wind with wing,

this mountain with the last one
and the next whose shadow

shortens, cast west
in a morning sun shaded

only by that raven calling
in answers to uncertainties. *Oh, ee?*

uncertain answers?

It doesn't matter what they say, the ravings
of a beleagured mind

sweep and scold and weaken my resolve
to climb, darkening to shadows

of clouds
of myself, without relief or thanks. *So*
Deeper, deepening

much
are these slow, bass winds?
of great wings:

eagles in an opening,
turkey vultures over rocky slopes and below

the relentless bluster and gust *of a shallow*
of a shallow and shrill echoing.

clouds

The bird to the wind
is ballast, a revenant with no mission *sh*

save to shadow
its own appetites, *ravenous*

as mine winging
like the torn map in my hand

I'll keep holding up, flapping in the wind,
until the minute I let go.

moment?

I'm let go

until I let it go

2nd
No drafts
March 2012

the lone
the lone
the lone
of bird doo

Mountain 1: Listening

Listening is less simply theft,
spread everywhere,

than talk. If I were to say,
What looms at night into the ear

or into fear like bears,
is only, by day, mere birds

rustling the leaves
(doesn't that mean stealing?) ✓
shuffling in dry leaves,
it might steal another listening

away. If I said, even to no one,
Digression is dangerous,

a kind of erosion
of heading south to north,

would I stay to lift these miles,
foot after foot? The trail

is one bedrock, however stratified
with fissures of sound taking

flight upward through the woods
and me. *What was that?*

I couldn't say
if there are two ways to hear,

two ways to walk, two
songs in the hand.

Mountain 2: Keep Moving

Keep moving till after.
That's what I tell myself.

Also that the moving becomes the after
moved, even loosened

to a fault. I want to feel
tectonics do the work.

Later: something blue or green or pooled
maybe emptied or erupted

like the fold and thrust of crust
that got me into this mess.

Footfalls on hard ground leave no print.
Water erases its tracks.

Maybe the places I've been
are still there. Maybe I'm a trace.

shaking the leaves. Hawks scoop by, hungry.
There are plenty of mosquitoes to go around.

Lava hardens, ~~footfalls~~
water erases its tracks.

Footfalls on rocky ground
leave no printed record.

record

Mountain 3: Light Wanes

As the light wanes,
these igneous origins melt me down

into prehistory. Are we almost there yet?
Little prairies on summer domes

bloom like snowglobes inside out,
abrupt, azonal, an excitation

of groundswell and I am borne along
alive as I know how.

In camp, collecting wood for a fire
gets harder as the season flares on;

all the fallen trees get used up.
But there will be storms

that bring more down to earth.
I sleep like a bridge

between the busy, curious creatures
and the indifferent rock

whose working days are over.
It's all about the weather

and the time of day now.
Then I wake up and the sky

breakfasts with me, bird-pricked, cold.
Morning was born to travel.

Mountain 4: Water

Hawksbill Mt,
Shenandoah Park, VA
(or another for a rainy day?)

Water is the great resaper—
but I know you know that.

that's not news,

In this deluge I am weathering
like a mountain, but not

like a mountain. Beyond a narrow range
of cold and damp

between mist and drip I slip
into my zone of leaching

where—brim-dipped, steamed
in drench—flesh

becomes another kind of mud
semi-solid, landslide.

Though I wrinkle, I am not you,
mountain, chevron-sided.

The horizon of my skin's as lost
and steeped in fog as the rim

of this new precipice. I inch
into golem, clay baby,

saturation zone. I am sure
your view is spectacular.

Mountain 5: Language

Each mountain is a new romance
language, ^{sharing} with a few cognates

and ~~shared~~ roots. I climb the mountains
to misunderstand the real again,

to speak in tongues
of igneous and sediment, intrusions

of granite in the vowels. To travel
the trail is to reinvent the wheel

^{known} of home, myself, whatever I meant
by here. Breathing

comes hard and deep, resists
limit and lung, mouths a translation

from leaving to return. I begin
disbelieving again, unbalancing

and rebalanced by the sounding out
of unknown names for ~~move~~ ^{moving}.

^{new} of names for the ^{still} underworld.

^{new} of names for what I don't know
might

by me, by here.

No longer fluent,

fluent?

fluent

of new names for home

of fluent names for home

send this one

Mountain 6: Dictionary

When I am done walking
I will look up

the definition for geology—
the word of earth—

in a dictionary without angles or sides
that maps the peaks and valleys

of somewhere I've never been. What of
these spells of breeze and weight,

the hesitance given to the climb,
the involuntary hurry of descent

will not last? Down
come the small pebbles

following in the footsteps
of early boulders, glacial till, ~~one~~ rock

? { in the crevice of my boot.
If it's the force

(or leave it)

of friction that holds things close
to the mountain, it is

the forces of gravity and time
that send them away. Can I

account for the kind of repetition
not to be mistaken for infinity?

Could I forget this
exact spot where today I beheld

the clear light bending through clouds,
the constant

coincidence of meeting my loneliness
in the same place as my joy?

Mountain 7: Steeper

The steeper the mountain
the more in my face

it is. *Look at me, look at me,*
it commands, jealous

larger

of horizons, sidling, and it's true
I can't take my eyes

off it for one second
until it finally lets up

and we can both surrender
to the longer view.

(a)

Mountain 8: Distances

Two mountains as I approach
seem to touch, attached

at their forested sides, but then
the nearer I get to one

the farther the other recedes:
some optical illusion

come-on and stand-off,
half embrace, half fling.

half-engagement?

So there is time to be
close, time to be far flung.

Intimacy, tease, mountains,
me—I will walk

*I'm up for some time to be close /
down for time [to be] far flung
with*

for the love of the near
and of the distances.

7

On Glassy Mountain

Here where the only way to go on
is to turn back,

along the sides of the ancient dome,
pine needles,

countless as raindrops,
lie now in crescent

thresholds between open rock
and undergrowth,

and the once-living
then windblown

needles now stilled on the ground
in rusted brown, gather in the same form

as last night's storm clouds against the sky
and storm water —

calmed in the bowls of stone —
curves the same way

as ponds in the hollows between hills,
and those concave bowls

are the mirror image
of the granite dome that holds them

up to the sun,
reflecting today —

as for eons between rainfalls —
its light across the valleys.

Mountain 10: Mountain Laurel (MA)

On the wet and shoulder-wide
shining leaf-padded path

between ~~a~~ close petal-scent⁵
floating and faint as mist^h

✓
and the deep drip of water
shushing my boots in the slick,

I rounded a turn and saw
a wide and colorless lack of woods

arisen, white, off the forest floor,
nothing but

some enormous pale dome ahead—
boulder? sky?—slowly become

one vast ^{blooming} flowering cloud. In the rain
blooms were all that was not rain,

^{flowers}
^{flowers} blooms were the bowed
hosts of rain that made of rain a crown.

Mountain 11: Not One

Not one mountain
but mountains

Not one fern but ferns
a field of fern

a flock of birds
a forest of trees

not you but you
not I

Mountain 12: Killington (VT)

After some timeless amount of time,
the wind and sun through rushing clouds,

without counting
the repeating leaves of maples
and endless needles of pines

I lost track of time
replacing any overplayed
chatter in my mind,

replaced by stones
after passing through stone walls,
old fields and apple trees

and trudging uphill for miles,
after climbing the boulder tumble,

you can see for just about infinity. Oh,
how to hold it in, how to let it go?

This walking around on mountain tops
is a little bit like flying, a lot like being high.

????

by
clique

unaccountable + stones

unaccountable

since moved from field to wall
replaced the overplayed
chatter in my mind

Apple trees grew from them
stood aside as I trudge uphill for miles.

I

No one said I had to climb
that last boulder tumble
off the trail to *other* peak
but I had come this far

clunk

there are some places
where time traces away, of
something like the *opposite*
of infinity or *the opposite*
it *opposite* or stands still
while you try to hold it
while you *let* it go
and you don't know what else
flying might feel like
you can do
that wd feel so much
like flying

move

Mountain 13: All for What [some mt named for someone special]

At last at the astounding summit, where
it is possible to behold

unimaginable
across the ~~unimaginable~~
distances and size, mountain upon mountain
~~rippling like~~ *manifesting time's* visible phases through time
and sky, I saw there

the most lit and stunning, gem-bright
fly, a lone piece of brilliant

work to be here at all
and to be that green. But all

for what? After all to be called
bottle green, when instead

the bottle should be named for you,
little mite. Just as this *pebble* mountain is named

for someone once thought grand
enough for the honor—

and he may never have climbed it.
Having arrived exactly here

come to
of the ten thousand places between
every two insect-spans of space

in which I too might fit
my perspective, you suggest

I ask myself the same question.
All for whatever

small surprise I might find?
And when I arrived,

what had I hoped to be,
once larval and then winged?

*OK now maybe that's overkill! it is possible to behold
great distances + size -
mountain upon
mountains sky bound
like visible phases of time*

*now long gone
now ~~lost~~ gone for generations*

< long gone to the generations > ?

Mountain 14: Branches

By the time I ^{get} arrive beyond the trees
it's as if the branches

of my lungs are the kind of branches
that are trees

and don't breathe.
The more air that surrounds me

the less of it I take in—in fact
the closer I climb

to heaven, the more like rock
my feet become, as if

they walked on the ground
the mountain stands upon

and not the ground the mountain is.
I stop to let the sky

catch up to me and rest.
I love this earth,

how hard it works
to keep its hold on me.

Mountain 15: Opposite (CT)

The mountain is the opposite
of breath. Solid earth,

tree roots, black bear,
eagle, trillium, birch

are reasons enough
to be inspired here.

for inspiration.

*are inspiration
enough*

Mountain 16: Greylock

As the path twisted west and east
I could see you across the valley.

You seemed miles and days away
but here I am barely hours later

on the other side of what I thought
I saw. On other,

even lesser mountains,
sometimes it takes like forever

to arrive. I don't get the relativist
concept of the space-time continuum,

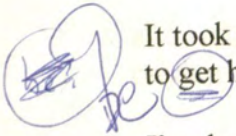
but I think understanding
has neither mass nor velocity.

I don't need understanding's assent
to climb. I just need to walk.

using "come"
too much?

Mountain 17: All My Life

Peak!—Where have you been
all my life?



It took me all these years
to get here and now

I've heard everything
is illusion. Mountain,

if you don't exist
don't make me work so hard.

Mountain 18: Duration

Duration is a mountain
that unwraps

as I walk it,
origami globe

where earth and feet
meet at the folds.

Mountain 19: Perigee

I am my own perigee
picking my way around

every arcuate scar
in the hemlocked hillside

loess in the dust
making a vertical face

at patterns and intervals
I ~~slink~~ like a lost glacier

✓ *creep*
weathering to particulate
on the lookout

for a blaze
I'm afraid to find

the other thing
I want

some unmappable range
from distal to divine

here in the angle
of dip and strike

out again
winded and northbound

Mountain 20: What Is Left

Geology says earth's past predicts its future:
it's deductive, from the particular

to the general, a kind of planetary
behavioral psychology. My magma memory

and its consequences
have shown themselves to be less than stellar.

For instance, which was the mountain
with a second path for lightning

to be avoided, from which I chose the one
least frightening, and then regretted

not entering the trumpeting night?
And which was the one where I began

to descend through the silent pines
never knowing I'd passed the top?

If everything
is earth then I am earth, no less

than weather, no less than soil, nor the oil
of the long gone who walked on this

metamorphosed rock before me—
though I'll amount to less

than a fist full of cosmic dust. When,
back home, I grow

a peony or a carrot in some rich dirt
glittering with the grit of what it was, *the plants*

like me,
~~the plant's~~ fresh roots will cling to what is left
of what has left the mountains.

fitful ✓

Mountain 21: Lichen (CT)

What clings to the mountain is only change.
Those weedy trees? In relative time

they stretched those smaller excavations
of shrub and vine, in turn invited by weather

held in the tiny leaves whose stems
broke the backs of rock, digging

into fissures full of grass. And before
the grass? Seed, harbored by moss,

and before the moss? A fine skim
of sediment layered at the meniscus

where rock ends and life begins
with lichen, that slow dynamite that feathers

ledge with it spiny green self-sacrificing
mulch, its acid cache of wind's debris

that settles into a niche where then
the lichen dies, replaced by moss

which seeds with small leaves, growing
to shrub and vine, then weedy trees—where?

On the overgrown slab of granite and quartzite
once given the name Bald Mountain.

Mountain 22: Hiker Hordes

The mass movement of hiker hordes
is a kind of solifluction—

a mudflow of boots and backpacks
at the scarps, the soil creep

of mileage subtraction—a human flowage
version of a modern Mesozoic.

later for this ~

Mountain 23: Quartz Spines

I can see where the wind has been, licking
clean the mountain's plate, daily deflating

the granite with its silken tongue and taking
away all the silicate it can carry.

And I can see where the glacier ran, in flutings
scratched along the rim, rocks in the soles

of ice dragging by. I would have liked to be here
for that migration, to be deafened by erratics

on their way through the Appalachians,
but even this simpler wind's uplift

wears me down. When I stroke the stone,
I can feel the parallel lines of hard quartz spines

left behind, and helped to rise—by both ~~not clean~~ wind & ice.
I know something I didn't need eroded

this morning when I stepped out onto this
ancient stage and felt—after wind, after cold—

some new peace breaking through me
like a metamorphic rock to the surface.

this morning when I stepped out onto this
metamorphic rock something I didn't need / eroded
+ something else broke through the surface
into the wind & cold.

a fear of heights & exposure
& something else, metamorphic, broke
into the wind & cold.

Wh something?

(24)

On What We Can Do Before It's Too Late

How can we cross a field,
dewless from a long and cloudless day,
if we have not yet entered the field
or the day? Still in the woods,
I try to imagine the field ahead, its flush
of birds from the grasses, its seventeen
species of wildflower—iris, daisy, lace—
and try to taste the heat in my throat
as I walk through the piercing
tinnitus of cicadas. I want the field
to be so real I feel the sharp
embedding of a tick's teeth ~~in my wrist~~
~~in~~ in my wrist, I want the field
before it exists
or not at all. Because
my father will die and until then what
can I do before it is too late? Only
walk beside him and hold his hand,
which has a particular feel—
of dryness with a kind of river inside it—
and always has, while remembering
the way that he held mine?
Where is the field
between the forests of imagine
and ~~memorize~~ ^{know}—where is the field I will be
crossing when ~~later~~ I walk alone
~~without~~ beside him, only remembering
his hand?

← ?

On What We Can Do Before It's Too Late

How can we cross a field,
dewless from a long and cloudless day,
if we have not yet entered the field
or the day? Still in the woods,
I try to imagine the field ahead, its flush
of birds from the grasses, its seventeen
species of wildflower—iris, daisy, lace—
and try to taste the heat in my throat
as I walk through the piercing
tinnitus of cicadas. I want the field
to be so real I feel the sharp
embedding of a tick's teeth
in my wrist, I want the field
before it exists
or not at all. Because ~~I know~~
my father will die and until then what
can I do before it is too late? Only
sit beside him and hold his hand,
which has a particular feel—
of dryness with a kind of river inside it—
and always has, while remembering
the way that he held mine?
Where is the field
between the forests of imagined
and known—where is the field
I'll cross when later I sit alone
beside him, only remembering
his hand?

hypostome

memorize

Poems from the Appalachian Trail

2012

(give or take a
few years)

In my room, the world is beyond my understanding;
But when I walk I see that it consists of three or four
hills and a cloud.

- Wallace Stevens
from "Of the Surface of Things"

Wm. Cowper, The Task (1785): "Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,..."

What is the day but. imagining & remembering?

How can we cross a field
deserted by a long cloudless day
if we have not yet entered the first
or the day? Still in the wood
I try to imagine the field, its hum
of birds from the grasses, its reverent
spears of wildflowers - Mt. dairy, lace -
I try to taste
the grasses' ~~flat~~ flat in my
throat
walk through the opening
of a crack,
I want the field to be so real
I feel the sharp embedding of a tick's
teeth in my cervix
I want the field before it exists
or not at all. Because, really,

What we do
before it's too late
my father and I
what we do
before it was too late
+ beside him
he held his hand
where is the
I cross when
beside him
later only
I remember
his hand?
that changes from imagined
to memory

KIMBERLY JOHNSON

A Metaphorical God
Persea Books

Ash Garden

Spring begins in a fatness of front lawns,
but not mine. I whose blowtorch urge approaches
the ascetic, whose resolve to bury

luxuriance grows raw-handed from shoveling,
have duly torched and shoveled grass until
the baked blades crumpled like old palm fronds

and their upturned roots drooped. Let spring begin
in ash and dust, I say, and bloom as little
as possible out of them. I'm planting

stonecrop, and rockmat, and if the fireweed
insists on sowing itself in cinders
I'll truckle it to my lenten aesthetic

or pluck it out: I'll parch the ground
to prompt by thirst the fireweed's fancy
gratuitous pink to put on the drab.

Let it learn in sackcloth colors to thrive
on desire alone. It's a discipline
ripe to teach. I excel at fasting.

4/1/12
spontaneous draft
of "On what we can do
before it's too late."

YUSEF KOMUNYAKAA

Warhorses
Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Grenade

There's no rehearsal to turn flesh into dust so quickly. A hair
trigger, a cocked hammer in the brain, a split second between
a man & infamy. It lands on the ground—a few soldiers duck &
the others are caught in a half-run—& one throws himself down
on the grenade. All the watches stop. A flash. Smoke. Silence.
The sound fills the whole day. Flesh & earth fall into the eyes &
mouths of the men. A dream trapped in midair. They touch their
legs & arms, their groins, ears, & noses, saying, What happened?
Some are crying. Others are laughing. Some are almost dancing.
Someone tries to put the dead man back together. "He just dove
on the damn thing, sir!" A flash. Smoke. Silence. The day blown
apart. For those who can walk away, what is their burden? Shreds
of flesh & bloody rags gathered up & stuffed into a bag. Each
breath belongs to him. Each song. Each curse. Every prayer is his.
Your body doesn't belong to your mind & soul. Who are you?
Do you remember the man left in the jungle? The others who
owe their lives to this phantom, do they feel like you? Would his
loved ones remember him if that little park or statue erected in
his name didn't exist, & does it enlarge their lives? You wish he'd
lie down in that closed coffin, & not wander the streets or enter
your bedroom at midnight. The woman you love, she'll never
understand. Who would? You remember what he used to say: "If
you give a kite too much string, it'll break free." That unselfish
certainty. But you can't remember when you began to live his
unspoken dreams.

hypothesis
of my wrist
in the flesh
of my wrist
in a tick put
in a mammal's
flesh

which has a particular feel of impress with
a kind of river noise if always has

First NC shafts
march 2012

needs work!

Mountain 1

Listening is less simply theft
spread everywhere,

than talk, and it's interesting
it's all interesting

but I stay on the trail,
because digression is dangerous,

a kind of erosion
of heading south to north,

a mileage that I lift
foot after foot?

The trail is bedrock,
however rooted, bed, rock,

a fissure, song in the woods
that keeps on circling

upward. There are two ways
to hear, two ways to walk,

two metamorphoses
in the hand.

too weird now?

get a bird in there,
plus squirrels beneath a bush
how abt some woods sounds to listen to
amazing how bearlike you can think
a chipmunk in the leaves sounds

a geo. was more split
stratified

Sounds
& theft

what flew
through me

mere birds
by day, ~~the birds~~ shuffle ~~the birds~~
in dry leaves ~~at night~~ loom large as bears
or in fear like bears.

If I were to say
it might take your gun listening
away

In dry leaves, by day, mere birds' shuffles
at night loom into the ear or into fear
like bears.

I couldn't say,
can't tell if
there are 2 ways

what looms at night into the ear
or into fear like bears is only, by day,
mere birds' shuffles in dry leaves

Mountain 2

Keep moving till after.
That's what I tell myself ~~Also that~~

the moving becomes the after
moved, even loosened

to a fault. I want to feel
tectonics do the work.

Later, ~~to~~ something blue or green or pooled
maybe emptied or erupted

like the fold and thrust of crust
that got me into this mess.

Footfalls on hard ground leave no print.
Water erases its tracks.

Maybe the places I've been
are still there. Maybe I'm a trace.

Hawks scoop by, hungry.
There are plenty of mosquitoes to go around.

(earthquake)

shakes the leaves

Mountain 3

As the light wanes, ~~this granite intrusion,~~
these igneous origins, melt me down

into prehistory. ~~What was I thinking?~~
Little prairies on summer domes

bloom like snowglobes inside out,
abrupt, azonal, an excitation

of groundswell and I am borne along
alive as I know how.

In camp, collecting wood for a fire
gets harder as the season goes on;

All the fallen trees get used up.

Luckily, there are storms

that bring more down to earth.

I sleep like a bridge

between the busy, curious creatures
and the indifferent rock

whose working days are over.
It's all about the weather

and the time of day now.
Then I wake up and the sky

breakfasts with me, cold.
Morning was born to travel.

something else here
(see #5)

just cut

yet

flares on

?

Fortunately
But

bird-pricked

Mountain 4 : *water*

Water is the great reshapar—
but I know you know that.

In this deluge I am weathering
like a mountain, but not

like a mountain. Beyond a narrow range
of cold and damp

between mist and drip I slip
into my zone of leaching

where—brim-dipped, steamed
in drench—flesh

becomes another kind of mud
semi-solid, landslide.

Though I wrinkle, I am not you,
mountain, chevron-sided.

The horizon of my skin^{is} as lost
and steeped in fog as the rim



of this new precipice. I inch
into golem, clay baby,

saturation zone. I am sure
your view is spectacular.

Mountain 5 : language

Each mountain is a new romance language, with a few cognates

and shared roots. I climb the mountains to misunderstand the real again,

to speak in tongues of igneous and sediment, intrusions

of granite in the vowels. To travel the trail is to reinvent the wheel

of home, myself, whatever I meant by *here*. Breathing

comes hard and deep, resists limit and lung, mouths a translation

from dislocate to return. I walk, disbelieving afresh, unbalancing,

rebalanced by the love of moving.

beginning
stumped forgotten
+ work effort labor
maniculate again

but Mike disbelieving

Love → something ~~else~~ attractive, compelling - but a long learning word?

Compulsion draw

rebalanced by ~~this~~ grammar + syntax of moving

signifiers

lines

of moving

sounding out of the names for moving

more language stuff

From leaving to return. I begin disbelieving again, unbalancing, ~~rebalanced~~ by the sounding out of names for moving

I begin / again

speech by the sounds of moving

leaving to begin again

from leaving to return, unbalancing, to beginning again, rebalanced by the love of moving, *fresh*

or not - leaving disbelieving? change me?

unsure afresh uncertain unknowing

unformed beginning puzzling

unmemorizing incoherent mantricate again

here's the cross? by what?

2 syl

Mountain 6: Dictionary

When I am done walking
I will look up

the definition for geology—
the word of earth—

in a dictionary without angles or sides
that maps the peaks and valleys

of somewhere I've never been. What of
these spells of breeze and weight,

the hesitance given to the climb,
the involuntary hurry *of descent*

?
~~of descent~~ will not last? Down
come the small pebbles

following in the footsteps
of early boulders, glacial till, one rock

in the crevice of my boot.
If it's the force

of friction that holds things close
to the mountain, it is

the forces of gravity and time
that send them away. Can I

*Step by step
mt by mt*

account for the kind of repetition
not to be mistaken for infinity?

Could I forget this
exact spot where today I beheld

the clear light bending through clouds,
the constant

coincidence of meeting my loneliness
in the same place as my joy?

Mountain 6: Dictionary

When I am done walking
I will look up

the definition for geology—
the word of earth—

in a dictionary without angles or sides
that maps the peaks and valleys

of somewhere I've never been. What of
these spells of breeze and weight,

the hesitance given to the climb,
the involuntary hurry

of descent will not last? Down
come the small pebbles

following in the footsteps
of early boulders, glacial till, one rock

in the crevice
of my boot. If it's the force

of friction that holds things close
to the mountain, it is

the forces of gravity ~~and rain~~ *time*
that send them away. Can I

account for the kind of repetition
not to be mistaken for infinity?

How could I forget this
exact spot where today I beheld

clear *through clouds*
the light bend ~~at the tree line~~
the constant

coincidence of meeting my loneliness
in the same place as my joy?

*heads more detail
clearly?*

*sh be a
word word
(dictionary)*

Mountain 8: Distances

Two mountains as I approach
seem to touch, attached

at their forested sides, but then
the nearer I get to one

the farther the other ^{recedes} becomes,
some optical illusion

come-on and stand-off,
half embrace, half fling.

*H seems
Apparently* *Long So*
Walking, there is time to be
up close, time to be far flung.

overlaps
I am here I walk
for love of the overlaps

and of distances
mountains, me, intimacy, tease

*needs more
dist*

mountains, me, intimacy, tease,
for love of
I walk the crossings
& overlaps, & the distances,
to get from here to there,
there to here

I kind of like "far love off" - it is a love poem after all

*to love the overlaps
& the distances*

~~from here to~~ **close** I walk
for love of the **overlaps** & overlaps
& of the distances.

*Not both-
but crossings
isn't really
the up close*

On Glassy Mountain

(a)

Here where the only way to go on
is to turn back

along the sides of
alongside the ancient dome
pine needles

countless as raindrops
lie now in stilled

crescent thresholds between open rock
and undergrowth

and the once-living
then once-windblown

gathered needles *stilled* *now as they are on the ground*
on the ground
form the same shapes in rusted brown
(forms)

as last night's storm clouds against the sky
and storm water

calmed in the bowls of stone
curves the same way

as ponds in the hollows between hills
and those concave bowls

are the mirror image
of the granite dome that holds them

up to the sun
reflecting today

as for eons between rainfalls
its light across the valleys.

→ still: Ghosts
+ last line

Mountain 10: ~~Mountain~~ Laurel (MA)

On the wet and shoulder-wide
shining leaf-padded path

between a ^{close} floating petal-scent
vague and faint in the mist,

< do

floating + faint as mist

the quiet drip of water
stroking spring shoots from above

and the ^{shush} shush of my boots
in slick muck

(in the slick ?)

I rounded a turn and saw
a wide and colorless lack of woods,

nothing but

some enormous pale dome ahead—
boulder? sky?—slowly become

more
enormity

5. ? ^{one} vast clouds of bloom. In the rain
they were what was not rain,

^{blooms} they were the ^{ghosts} ghosts of rain
rising white off the forest floor,

something more royal + alive?
kings + queens
priests

a reign of flowers crowning me
with deep and fond damp bows.

very fine
off
+ a bit schmaltzy

with their ^{leaning} deep damp bows

with deep + leaning bows

one vast flowerupcloud

that made of rain a crown

Mountain 12: Killington (VT)

After some timeless amount of time,
the wind and sun through rushing clouds,

the repeating leaves of maples
and endless needles of pines

replacing any overplayed
chatter in my mind,

after passing through stone walls,
old fields and apple trees

and trudging uphill for miles,
after climbing the boulder tumble,

you can see for just about infinity.

This walking around on mountain tops

is a little bit like flying, a lot like being high
as this earth above the earth.

all

kind of like #14

clank

Mountain 13: All for What [some mt named for someone special]

At last at the astounding summit,
I saw there

the most lit and stunning, gem-bright
fly, a lone piece of brilliant

work to be here at all
and to be that green. But all

for what? After all to be called
bottle green, when instead

the bottle should be named for you,
little mite. Just as the mountain is named

for someone once thought grand
enough for the honor

though he may never have climbed it.
Having arrived exactly here

of the ten thousand places between
every two insect-spans of space

in which I too might fit
my perspective, you suggest

I ask myself the same question.
All for whatever

small surprise I might find?
And maybe another: When I arrived,

what had I hoped to be,
once larval and then winged?

← another line or 2 of effort ^{not} ~~get there~~ fatness

with the ~~its~~ ^{its} enormity ^{it's downy green to}
where it is possible to behold some generations of time ancestral
its grand enormity a panorama with its ripples of distant rises
go term for this

parallels sequencing

where it is possible to behold ~~across~~ ^{across} distances
as ~~the~~ ^{the} ripples of distant generations in flight
mountain after mt rippling like ^{the sky}

(not headed ?!)

← ~~something~~ ^{something} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~approx~~ ^{approx} grandeur + largeness

rippling like phases
stages

in the great

the great leaps of flight from height to height
linked generations of height
Summit
Summit

✓
Mountain 14: Branches

By the time I arrive beyond the trees
it's as if the branches

of my lungs are the kind of branches
that are trees

and don't breathe.
The more air that surrounds me

the less of it I take in—in fact
the closer I climb

to heaven, the more like rock
my feet become, as if

they walked on the ground
the mountain stands upon

and not the ground the mountain is.
I stop to let the sky

catch up to me and rest.
I love the earth how hard

hard
it works
to keep its hold on me.

← this

CT

Mountain 15: Opposite

The mountain is the opposite
of breath. Solid earth,

^{tree}
rock, roots, black bear,
wild rhododendron

^{more}
are the only reasons
I'm inspired here.

kind of
neg. art the mt?

hickory + birch

are reasons enough
to be inspired here.

Mountain 16: Greylock

As the path twisted west and east
I could see you across the valley.

You seemed miles and days away
but here I am barely hours later

on the other side of what I thought
I saw I don't understand

anything.
I just walk.

look these up
↓

even lesser /
On other mountains
Sometimes it's like I never arrive.
it feels like

I don't get / the theory of
relativity / distance, or time,
the space

I don't understand anything
→ it seems I don't have to
under time or distance
to get from here to there
Understanding is not the same as propulsion
Understanding does not roll
analog

assent

I don't need the assent
of understanding
I just need to walk

underg is ~~compulsion, not propulsion~~

I don't need its assent

~~But~~ Underg has no mass

I just walk
I'll just walk.

Mountain 16: Greylock

As the path twisted west and east
I could see you across the valley.

You seemed miles and days away
but here I am barely hours later

on the other side of what I thought
I saw. On other, even lesser mountains,

sometimes it feels like I'll ~~never~~ ^{forever}
arrive. I don't get the theory

of relativity, distance, space, or time,
but I think understanding ^{has no mass or velocity}

~~has no mass.~~ I don't need ^{understanding's assent} ~~its assent~~
~~to walk. Just walk.~~ ^{I just need to walk.}
~~a climb.~~

↑ needs to be up - not same!
relativist concept of

the spacetime continuum

look up
relativity - mass

jee
penge -
promise?

Mountain 17: All My Life

Where have you been
all my life?

It took me all these years
to get here and now I've heard

everything
is illusion. Mountain,

if you don't exist
don't make me work so hard.

*And some incredible
beauty couplet first?*

I've heard everything

Mountain 18: Duration

Duration is a mountain
that unwraps

as I walk it, origami song
sung in a round

where earth and feet
meet at the folds.

more body paper things - not music
(the song + round can be elsewhere -
many mts)

origami globe

as I walk it,
origami globe

Mountain 19: Perigee

I am my own perigee
picking my way around

every arcuate scar
in the hemlocked hillside

loess in the dust
making a vertical face

at patterns and intervals
I walk like a lost glacier

skink ?

weathering to particulate
on the lookout

for a blaze
I'm afraid to find

the other thing
I want

some unmappable range
from distal to divine

here in the angle
of dip and strike

out again
winded and northbound

Mountain 20: What Is Left

Geology says earth's past predicts its future:
it's deductive, from the particular

to the general, ~~whether~~ from magma
or cosmic dust — though my memory

and its consequences
have shown themselves to be less than stellar.

For instance, which was the mountain
with a second path for lightning

to be avoided, from which I chose the one
least frightening, and then regretted

not ^{entering} watching the trumpeting night?
And which was the one where I began

to descend through the silent pines
never knowing I'd passed the top?

If everything
is earth then I am earth, no less

than weather, no less than soil, nor the oil
of the long gone who walked on this

metamorphosed rock before me. When,
back home, I grow

a peony or a carrot in some rich dirt
glittering with the grit of what it was,

^{the plants} its fresh roots will cling to what is left
of what has left the mountains.

a kind of ^{planetary} behavioral psychology.
~~of the planet~~

(~~though~~) the magma of my ^{own} memory
has been less than cosmic dust
has had consequences far less
stellar than cosmic dust
My magma memory
+ its consequences,

though I'll amount to less than a pit full of cosmic
~~cosmic dust~~
dust.

Mountain 21: Lichen (CT)

What clings to the mountain is only change.
Those weedy trees? In relative time

← more sense of fullness —
over the dense undergrowth

they stretched ^{into those} ~~into~~ the smaller excavations
of shrub and vine, in turn invited by weather

held in the tiny leaves whose stems
broke the backs of rock, digging

into fissures full of grass. And before
the grass? Seed, harbored by moss,

and before the moss? A fine skim
of sediment layered at the meniscus

where rock ends and life begins
with lichen, that slow dynamite that feathers

dumb
silent
pure

ledge with it spiny green self-sacrificing
mulch, its acid cache of wind's debris

that settles into a niche ^{where then}
~~where~~ the lichen dies, replaced by moss

which seeds with small leaves, growing
to shrub and vine, then ^{consider} weedy trees. ^{Where?}

← see to have another Q?

Here ^Q ^{litter} on the slab of granite and quartzite
once given the name Bald Mountain.

~~buried~~
overgrown

The mountains of Western North Carolina are filled with wonderful streams, rivers, creeks, and waterfalls. It's a photographer's paradise! All you need is a camera with a manual setting, a tripod, some good shoes, and a sense of adventure. I'll share with you some of my favorite places for waterfall shooting.

There is a ten-mile stretch of Highway 64 between Franklin and Highlands where you can find eight waterfalls within an easy walk of the road. Dry Falls, Cullasaja Falls, and Bridal Veil Falls are a few of my favorites there.

The watershed in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park provides numerous waterfall opportunities, too. Mingo Falls near Cherokee is a special place near the Southern entrance to the park. The Cataloochee Valley has a wonderful creek running through it with many nice places for photography.

The Blue Ridge Parkway offers some spectacular water shots as well. Linville Falls, just off the Blue Ridge Parkway, is one of the most magnificent falls in the entire state. If you are willing to do a little hiking, you can find places like Alarka Falls near Bryson City where you will almost certainly have the falls all to yourself!

Here are a few tips for achieving great water photographs. First, make sure that there is even light over

the water that you are shooting. Bright sun splotches will cause your photos to look washed out. Second, decide how much softness you want in the flowing water. For softer water, use a smaller aperture and a slower shutter

speed. For a frozen water look, you need a very fast shutter speed. In both cases, use a tripod for a nice stable and focused image.

Finally, compose the shot so that you have a nice balance between foreground elements, midground elements, and background. I like to find a composition that will also have some

sort of interest in the side, providing a framed look. Look for branches, leaves, or rocks that can help frame the image. Moss-covered boulders, especially when wet, make a great addition to water shots. Watch out for distracting elements though. A twig sticking out into the photo or a piece of trash in the image



ALARKA Falls



LINVILLE Falls



MINGO Falls

will distract from the beauty of the scene.

Most of all, have fun!

To see more of Drew Campbell's work, visit drwcampbell.com. Drew is a member of f32 Photography Group, an organization that meets the second Wednesday of each month at the Reuters Center on the UNCA campus at 6:30 P.M. The diverse individuals of Western North Carolina who are members of the group known as f/32 are young and old, professionals and amateurs. The common bond is a mutual love of photography and what it can show us about our world. Find out more at f32nc.com.