

We Know Morning

"Oh friend, I love you, think this over
carefully! If you are in love
then why are you asleep?"
- Kabir

How could we have fallen asleep with night
tramping nearly naked through our bedroom,
sins wrapped round it like unsuccessful
towels; ~~with~~ names of months newly designed
to increase the dust of distance hung from brooms
sweeping by the windows; and with your heart
moving beside me subtle and unimposing
like a tree [?], that strong, that specific?

It was the shock of morning, diffused light,
that ~~caused~~ ^{brings back} the tears you woke to see, the rain
that waited ~~behind them~~ ^{to meet} while you slept on.
How could we disregard the futility
intrinsic ~~in our~~ ^{to love} sleep, the sorrow
inherent in the worship of reason or necessity,
how ignore the end of endlessness
in the finite nature of futures?

We know we had to sleep, we know
that you had to leave. We know nightmares
are no more uncommon than ~~bad weather~~,
and our breath rises like ~~tides~~ ^{the} even now,
the same in loneliness as in love.

We know morning
cannot be called surprising.
We know these things.

→ longing

ON THE WAY

How so much snow falling
Becomes one snowfall, one winter, lengthening

The shadows of things caught
In a day's last light.

Even the dead trees
By some trick of light

Seem to grow once more.
So much emptiness

Between the four winds crossing one another
Like old familiar enemies.

So much frost and forgetting
Where the heart is.

Under a halo of woodsmoke
Someone adds dry twigs to a fire

Designed to melt the dense season, inseparable
From the lost heart.

He knows the thunder of breaking ice floes,
Believes in the relentless silence

Of new-growing things, the sudden recognition
Of unremembered footprints.

It is a long walk back
Over such deep snow, such a frozen dreamless place.

Alice B. Fogel

ON THE WAY

How so much snow falling
Becomes one snowfall, one winter, lengthening

The shadows of things caught
In a day's last light.

Even the dead trees
By some trick of light

Seem to grow once more.
So much emptiness

Between the four winds crossing one another
Like old familiar enemies.

So much frost and forgetting
Where the heart is.

Under a halo of woodsmoke
Someone adds dry twigs to a fire

Designed to melt the dense season, inseparable
From the lost heart.

He knows the thunder of ^{the} breaking ice floes,
Believes in the ~~relentless~~ silence

Of new-growing things, the sudden recognition
Of unremembered footprints. *(one's own)*

It is a long walk back
Over such deep snow, *(such a frozen dreamless place.)*

Alice B. Fogel

CONFUSION OF SORROWS

HOW TO LIVE

There is another woman
running with tears, face
of a cliff wet under the unfathomable
sky. Glass, concrete, metal
are more easily borne.

But what are volition and desire
if not second nature?—
Destiny gathered by destiny designed.
Instinct informing fortune.

In northern grazing grounds
grass grows only for the reindeer
and the deer eat their grass
just long enough to live
till invisible flies come and run them
to their deaths.

At war, soldiers cease
to be men. They are like the dancers
and the mountain climbers whose bodies
know what freedom is.

Love is as semaphoric: A ritual
motion of unnameable source.

In all things there are two
tags for identification.
The other woman holds one
for safe keeping. The second
is for the living, for the knowing
how to live
without knowing how.

Then, you and she, he and I, we and you.

HOW TO LIVE

There is another woman
running with tears, face
of a cliff wet under the unfathomable
sky. Glass, concrete, metal
are more easily borne.

But what are volition and desire
if not second nature?—
Destiny gathered by destiny designed.
Instinct informing fortune.

In northern grazing grounds
grass grows only for the reindeer
and the deer eat their grass
just long enough to live
till invisible flies come and run them
to their deaths.

At war, soldiers cease
to be men. They are like the dancers
and the mountain climbers whose bodies
know what freedom is.

Love is as semaphoric: A ritual
motion of unnameable source.

In all things there are two
tags for identification.
The other woman holds one
for safe keeping. The second
is for the living, for the knowing
how to live
without knowing how.

CONFUSION OF SORROWS

cross
Night's light comes in to rest on the sills like snow.
Rills of water wander one window lengthwise,
carrying their little loads of dust
down to the lintels. Indistinct
movements inside are dark, distilled.
The shadow of a hand on the table
is a fresia's fallen silk.

Lamplight forms a mask
of chiaroscuro on her leaning face.
You, ~~in~~ in a well-lit house, beneath its overlooming
darkness, dream ~~of~~ of their bargains,
our balance of payments.
~~~~~ I remember ~~his beautiful fingers and face.~~

She in her newest nightgown moves across more windows.
He is in his chair, not reading.
You take up all the room
in the room called "you".
Smoke, or steam, a wave of white
flies ~~across~~ *past* my reflection in the glass.
Mouth open, the shameless moon
stares in on each of us, in our separate cells.

~~~~~ ~~Delicate feathered arrows shift in her quiver.~~
In the frost, leaves brown and crumble
just the same as if they were burning.
He considers going out to walk off the night.
The underside of my wrist recalls your hard body's
soft skin. The moon pours
through the windows with all its shattering rain.

It is no longer possible to leave them
as we found them. ~~Between us then and now~~
Even if we wanted to.
A confusion of sorrows reigns.
Them, you and she, he and I, me and you.

Alfred

THE MEADOW

From down the road the dark
stares back
empty-eyed, as if absent
from the earth

But here in closer, warmer night
this is what I see: the meadow
black as moonless
water

Beside that dark road,
between trees, gifted
with a thousand
fireflies

Rising, always rising
at each moment of light,
like snow returning
to air

STILL LIFE

for my father

28 All that you have wanted comes to you
one after another, as apparitions, accusing
you of not wanting them enough,
knowing you knew how. They wander
wilsome as scales and arpeggios
unsucceeded by sonata.

Never mind, for the moment, the artist,
yourself; think of the art whose life
is infinite future, whose embryo
is your own power, waiting
in the wings of its own fright.

*Never mind, for the moment,
the artist, yourself;
Only art's life has an infinite future.
It waits in the wings of your own
fright.*

Let it in, let it out. Let it go. Love,
what is love but attention,
concentration, and who knows better
all that is given to be loved? How can I
be telling you? You, the teacher, the elder,
my father. You could forget
yourself in return for all that's offered
for memory. Take care of that old man
you have not yet become:

he is the only child who will prove you.

1413 Listen, get up, it is time to get started,
not time to rest, or grieve. After all,
it's still life. I tell you, the sheer
weightlessness of a tree's branch is in its reaching
for the distances, for all the world
like the curve of earth.

You can feel how the lune of its embrace
includes you, when you look out to sea
and know the horizon
is only a line your mind draws
for comfort.

It is not time to rest, get up, don't grieve

Now get up, don't grieve.

Alice B. Fogel

NEWS the Letter

And then there's the snow when it falls, bearing
down on itself, ten thousand
fools, each separate and single
minded. Yes, so much silence mutes you send me away
and mocks these marks
that dirty your once-white page.
But forget the origins,
routes, detours, destination. This news
is your own heartbeat,
it always is. It's all there, too: waiting.
The time spent remembering
because it's too late to live,
your too-great loves, insuperable,
your urgent unbelieving message.
What use the light that bares its own shadow?
All is lost, at least
on the eye of the blind.
~~And this unreadable news!~~ ^{ten} thousand thoughts at once
revealed and obscured. Just the same,
a blizzard smothers, in moments,
what was, in a word,
empirical, of essence,
the proof, definition. But something was
still warm at the source
of this sudden fallen storm.
Reaching through it (it's not hard)
I touch my fingers to earth.

Allen S. Vogel

PERSEPHONE

Under the world
where you lived without
season before me

you wait too, held
to the promise that was
bitter from the beginning.

I go, but summer begins
with no blessing of mine.
I no longer know

what once I did believe.
In your hard hands
the pomegranate

amber and jewel
offer of love and sorrow,
turned earth

stranger and sky
to foreign land.
Gift of blood

on your retractable knife.
"Springtime is only a metaphor,"
you said,

but you weren't sure.
For it was to hold Spring
that first you took me;

it was for fear of it
that then you let me go.
You can stand firm

in your duality
but when the sun here fails
to warm me

or when it warms me
feeling like your arms,
when a last leaf finally

falls with a tear
of untimely joy, and I
the lost harbinger

wandering the wrong side
of this mirroring world awake
listening for the leaving

of the lark, don't you see
what has been done? Oh this pact,
this pendulum.

Love, you send me away
for a promise of spring,
and renewal, and to grace

when to live without you again
is to winter in a waste-
land, waiting.

Alice B. Fogel

On the way

To go back, to go on

Travelling Back

JOURNEYING BACK
DESIGN FOR RESCUE

Leading back
turning back
territory

On the way back

going on back

How so much snow falling
Becomes one snowfall, one winter, lengthening

The shadows of things caught
In a day's last light.

Even the dead trees
By some trick of light

Seem to grow once more.
So much emptiness

empty air

Between the four winds crossing one another
Like old familiar enemies.

So much frost and forgetting
Where the heart is.

Under a halo of woodsmoke
Someone adds dry twigs to a fire

Designed to melt the dense season, inseparable
From the lost heart.

He ^{knows} believes in the thunder of breaking ice floes,
The relentless silent force
believes in

} cliché ?

Of new-growing things, the sudden recognition
Of unremembered footprints.

longing on, and going on,

It is a long walk back
Over such deep snow, such a frozen dreamless place.

①?

↓ stark reality

Eskimo:

the distance across a deep place;
+ having to melt the heart
of the windigo -
to liberate life

the idea that going back
is on the way to going on,
is in fact the only way
to go on

In fact for all we know it is still with us but since we've forgotten what it is, we don't know that it is. Do you hear anything?

THE CANDLEMAKER

I like to think of them as warm fingers
that grow with what they touch.
That everything seems to nurture them, the core
with the air that later surrounds
their light.

WITHOUT WORDS

For another reason

it might have stayed longer,
that sound. For the mountain

where it could not have been
a piano that we heard ~~though~~ it

For the sake of another day

living, that sound, like insects
eating leaves at night?

Or because it was easy, again,
for moonlight to be so beautiful
at rest in its silence nearby?

In order to learn wind
as distinguishable from air?—

But it takes too much time to believe
what's known in an instant ago,
and then, to explain

a sound like that, like music

when it dissolves, just like night, fades like memories, like night,
without ever having spoken.

This wax and its wick

are like a love which ~~didn't seem to reach the ears, faint music~~
and neglects the future ~~and it's far, as if it were not~~
other.

I hold such a memory

and I know it is a memory

to do with a memory

in these candles that grow
from my own memory

and every time I light one
they become a memory

on their own

Maybe we never really heard anything.

But then why is there a memory

or the shadow of a memory

like the amnesiac's, knowing he should know;

but - what? So if we assume

there was something, how to tell

what could have been done

to retain it? - assuming ~~that~~ if we had been

desireable to retain it. Or we could pretend it is

still with us - whatever it was. Is.

We could close our eyes & listen for it.

THE CANDLEMAKER

I like to think of them as warm fingers
that grow with what they touch.
That everything seems to nurture them, the core
within, to the air that later surrounds
their light.

They grow, they dissolve. I melt
what is left, add it to another, like a god.
In one moment each is complete, yet a candle
is not a moment but an entire
span of time, like death.

As I sit, waiting, tines of forks
mock us from their safety, alone,
stonesome, full of purpose, and permanence.
Still, I dip and raise,
dip and raise.

In the dark fluid are the sea's rills
and dimmer hills of promised land.
But each time my candle emerges, suspendent,
I remember him on the green hills
in all that sun,

newest clarity, detail without shadow
as if the very tracery of his veins
depended on me for its path. We were
illuminated from all sides at once,
pacific.

This wax and its wick
are like a love which forgets its separate pasts
and neglects the future flame, its cause.
It will burn, forgetting itself, each
other.

I hold such a fragile life in my hands
and I know that it's nothing
to do with me. Every time, I disbelieve
in these candles that grow
from my own fingers

and every time, fulfilling a destiny,
they become themselves
on their own.

"The greatest poverty is not to live
In a physical world, to feel that one's
desire
Is too difficult to tell from despair."
—W. Stevens

THE SELF, FALLING

That one could be so small, slipping
through its own self, as silt shifts
down through its rock bed.
What happens when we wish
is something unforeseen
and other. That we are drawn
to windows and other openings,
that the threshold is as fragile
as desire. This falling
is a bedtime fable, of finding
bottom, false promise of final
softness there. The rest,
silence. But what is worse
than going on is the ending,
that once there the darkness
silvers the glass to mirror
and the eyes too are open,
horribly. What is that shape
that forms its compulsive shadows
through which it is impossible not, again,
to fall? And still the wishful self
has its own ideas.
That one could be so small
and yet unable to rise, that laws
here are still binding, the legacy
of an ancient alchemy. All that rises
is the voice at the end
of its question, for nothing
weighs more than the frail hope falling
forever through its own despair.

Alice B. Fogel

HOW MUCH

How much simpler to go down
just like history, like reason
informs you, just like everything
else. How much lighter, even, than fire
surrounded by air
until completed by earth.
Some semblance of sorrow saved
in calling the center anything
that's not the edge.
How easy to turn back
and remember it
as dream, or as
one more idea for a dream.

TWO WOMEN WAITING

You see one in the valley
looking at a certain place
where the two sides of the river meet.
The water, the hours, the waiting
pass by as if on their own.
She stands at the edge
where the wet stones are drying, almost
too slowly to be seen,
washes the gold for impurities
in her yellow bowl. Bees swarm
at a distance, mistaking
everything for honey.

One considers the spokes of a wheel,
imagines it splitting unbearable
pinecones of perfection
on the forest floor. For her,
waiting delivers its own presence, one
not unlike the desired,
only immortal, lacking
the life of the living.
You might find her in full view
of the road, pretending to be
busy with something else, drawing
water, perhaps, or tapping trees
out of season. She will wait
forever empty handed, forever
inching backwards off the cliff.

HARBINGER

TWO WOMEN WAITING

Here among the other graves,
Between these ancient vines.
Year in and year out they thicken,
You can see one in the valley
looking at a certain place
where the two sides of the river meet.
The water, the hours, the waiting
pass by on their own.
She stands at the edge
where the wet stones are drying, almost
too slowly to be seen,
washes the gold for impurities
in her yellow bowl. Bees swarm
at a distance, mistaking
everything for honey.

One considers the spokes of a wheel,
imagines it splitting unbearable
pinecones of perfection
on the forest floor. For her,
waiting delivers its own presence, one
not unlike the desired,
only immortal, lacking
the life of the living.

You might find her in full view
of the road, pretending to be
busy with something else, drawing
water, perhaps, or tapping trees
out of season. There is no season.
And there she is now, empty handed,
inching off the cliff.

*She waits, but doesn't
has no faith*

*her waiting blinds her
to any approach
even the woods look lonely
the woods are more barren
than the road*

Stillbirth

*She will wait
forever empty-handed, forever
inching backwards off the cliff*

HARBINGER

I found the new name
Here among the other graves,
Between these ancient vines.
Year in and year out they thicken,
Strangling one another
With sickening design.
Stone, growth, neither cares
What stays here or what goes.

Still winter: How everything seems
To lack imagination.
You can see the dried
Efforts of last year, ignorant
Of spring, lying stagnant
Without hope, without
Anticipation. The will
To be perennial, lost.

I will take with me
My own name to protect
The innocent; my own life, its own
innocence.
I know this: When I leave you,
Forgetful harbinger,
How much more
You will leave me

Among the others where no one
Leaves wreaths.
You won't come back.
There was that season
You once loved. Go on,
Want it again.
Ask again. Begin again
To grieve.

SAN JUAN ISLAND

for Jim Lawrence

Everything softens, the rain
makes its slow way
down and through.
You build your house
under water.
No suddenness, no sounds,
as if the hammer
of a gentle man
did to wood the same thing
love does to children.
You sleep
where-ever the whim
of night falls,
your comforter the susurrous
talk of drops
too small to see.
In the marsh, sleepy movement
beneath wet leaves.
By the lake, between weeping
willows, the white apples
swell and sway
hanging from branches
like warm icicles.
For a moment in the mornings
from its pillow
all the blue of the sky
unfolds like a baby's limb,
then settles back
into its daydream bed,
more soft clouds.

Alice B. Fogel

GRACE

Think of the awkward stance
of the stationary object
disappearing behind its paralysis,
etching all the air around
into visibility.

How else could the flying
know open spaces between things?
Faith in flight, swallows
darting through trees
as if matter were only imaginable.

One morning the dragonflies,
fleet of tiny winged horses
weaving in from sea like another sky.
Mythical, they parted around me
as if I were something that had always been

standing by the ocean on this day
and on all the days of their folklore
as they flew past me, always
on their way to grace.

THE FRUIT

The tree is without guile.
Its roots know its core
From the same distance
As its branches. It is a distance
Of which it is certain.

It comes from a place where dreams turn
In their sleep;
Abandons itself to a slow future
Like the immigrant.

There is no misinterpreting:
It has the gift of seeing
From an eon's eye.
It knows nothing of the purpose
Of small days.

Its heart is never unfamiliar.

The fruit ~~of the tree~~ takes life
Giving nothing in return.
The tree asks only this
Of its suspendant: That it put distance
Between itself and the force of gravity—

The only thing it will answer to
But not yet. The only thing
It must answer to, but not yet.
Not yet.

FRUIT

The tree is without guile.
Its roots know its core
From the same distance
As its branches. It is a distance
Of which it is certain.

It comes from a place where dreams turn
In their sleep;
Abandons itself to a slow future
Like the immigrant.

There is no misinterpreting:
It has the gift of seeing
From an eon's eye.
It knows nothing of the purpose
Of small days.

Its heart is never unfamiliar.

The fruit it bears takes life
Giving nothing in return.
The tree asks only this
Of its suspendant: That it put distance
Between itself and the force of gravity—

The only thing it will answer to.
The only thing
It must answer to, but not yet.
Not yet.

~~She gathers~~
~~instinct, a design; other mysteries~~
~~Or all these things combined~~

Design

INSTINCT

There is a woman beside me
composed, but running
with tears like the face
of a cliff wet under the unfathomable
sky. Glass, concrete, metal
are more easily borne.

~~By instinct or by design, why yet another mystery~~
~~There is a thing she calls instinct~~
~~not knowing a better word.~~ ~~ing all these things combined~~

In northern grazing grounds
the grass grows only for the reindeer
and the deer eat the grass to live
only to run from invisible flies
to death.

At war, soldiers cease
to be men. They are like the dancers
and the mountain climbers whose bodies
know what freedom is.
Love is as semaphoric: A ritual
motion of unnameable source.

~~54~~
2 In all things there are two
tags for identification.
The other woman holds one
for safe keeping. The second
is for the living, for the knowing
how to live
without knowing how.

STUDY IN G

In the jungle where the hard-worked
Land returns itself
Again and again to the underbrush
As if by a reflex for making history

A girl sits at her piano, playing with one finger,
One note. It is enough
For her: In it she hears all the notes
That wander from it, and all
That resolve themselves there.

This is not to say that all things
Can be pressed like a key
Into one secret, one name we all whisper
To ourselves at night.

It is only after the unfortunate dreaming
That we search for what we already know
In order to continue to forget.

EVENING SKY

Clouds are rallying together in her like fences.
In, out, displace, connect. The valences
At work: An evening* of values
Of dark and light.
You call it arrogance, but ~~the stars~~ the stars
Tolerate daylight, and not the other
Way around. You ought to look away
When the sky turns her back like this
Pulling her dark shawl down
Over her face in order to weep alone. Be patient.
She's not free (though you think she is); her wing
Is broken, or might as well be. She only hovers
By default. This moment will be borne off, or fall.
On your breezy hill, where with each gust
Another leaf lets go
Of all it ever knew, you stand, bowing
Like a ship before waves. The sky moves
Losing her balance as if on purpose
And falls into your open hand, giving
Only one glance over her shoulder.

*this is read in 3 syllables

IF THIS WERE MINE

That day when I walked with you
I can't tell you this: I watched a squirrel
Drag an oak branch to its home across the park.
How incredible, I thought, to want something
That much.

*

That night the shadows of whole continents
Came to trespass across your face—
Birthmarks in the shape of strangers
And friends. Your father.

I saw myself, a crowning island beneath your eye.
It was then I learned

SONG

When the sun leaves
And the leaves fly

If all this were a moment of moments,
You would be
Till the tree takes flight

Crevices, caressing
In song.
Forever, deep in those places that can't be seen,
Not even from airplanes.

If this were mine, perfect sempiternal gem,
I would spare you the greed of men and their endless
Underminings, spare you the endless
Welding of season to season, that separates
Your activities from themselves.

*

The squirrel is at home, eating his fat acorns.
And if I had your world, you would live
Forever in a certain place, where the landscape
Is so poetic there is nothing more to say
And where the surrounding blue rivers know more
Than even you thought possible. For instance, this:

That time as: no bearing on happiness;
That distance was never defined by miles;
That silence lacks nothing
But words.

not

IF THIS WERE MINE

That day when I walked with you
I didn't tell you this: I watched a squirrel
Drag an oak branch to its home across the park.
How incredible, I thought, to want something
That much.

*

That night the shadows of whole continents
Came to trespass across your face—
Birthmarks in the shapes of strangers
And friends. Your father.
I saw myself, a drowning island beneath your eye.
It was then I learned to pray:

*

If all this were mine, the mountain of moments,
You would be the snow in its secret
Crevices, caressing the curves and rises, sleeping
Forever, deep in those places that can't be seen,
Not even from airplanes.

If this were mine, perfect sempiternal gem,
I would spare you the greed of men and their endless
Underminings, spare you the endless
Welding of season to season, that separates
Your memories from themselves.

*

The squirrel is at home, eating his fat acorns.
And if I had made this world, you would live
Forever in a certain place, where the landscape
Is so poetic there is nothing more to say
And where the evermoving blue rivers know more
Than even you thought possible. For instance, this:

That time has no bearing on happiness;
That distance was never defined by miles;
That silence lacks nothing
But words.

IF THIS WERE MINE

That day when I walked with you
I didn't tell you this: I watched a squirrel
Drag an oak branch to its home across the park.
How incredible, I thought, to want something
That much.

*

That night the shadows of whole continents
Came to trespass across your face—
Birthmarks in the shapes of strangers
And friends. Your father.
I saw myself, a drowning island beneath your eye.
It was then I learned to pray:

*

If all this were mine, the mountain of moments,
You would be the snow in its secret
Crevices, caressing the curves and rises, sleeping
Forever, deep in those places that can't be seen,
Not even from airplanes.

If this were mine, perfect sempiternal gem,
I would spare you the greed of men and their endless
Underminings, spare you the endless
Welding of season to season, that separates
Your memories from themselves.

*

The squirrel is at home, eating his fat acorns.
And if I had made this world, you would live
Forever in a certain place, where the landscape
Is so poetic there is nothing more to say
And where the evermoving blue rivers know more
Than even you thought possible. For instance, this:

That time has no bearing on happiness;
That distance was never defined by miles;
That silence lacks nothing
But words.

sent

⑦

no

PROMISE

Premature spring. But the sudden thaw,
false Aphrodite, gave those seeds their soil.
The brief green, the almost happy yellow, stood
so bravely when the cold returned.

~~Now, but the cold has returned again.~~

There, the beautiful, incompatible snow
trying to be a blanket, not meaning any harm.

The initial sound, the violence: Impact
of axe on log, whole trees unable to bear
the shock of being at rest on the ground.
A strange warmth, breathed from the brittle
cracklings of those dead things. Listen:
It is the same sound my heart
is making tonight.

Some people like gardens: Mystery
they think they've tamed. Some people
say they love the pine just as much
as the thrill of cutting it down.
The inconstancy of seasons fools us
every time. Compared to the nature of things
what can we know of promise?

PROMISE

Premature spring. But the sudden thaw,
false Aphrodite, gave those seeds their soil.
The brief green, the almost happy yellow, stood
so bravely when the cold returned.

~~Now look how the frost kills them.~~

There, the beautiful, incompatible snow
trying to be a blanket, not meaning any harm.

The initial sound, the violence: Impact
of axe on log, whole trees unable to bear
the shock of being at rest on the ground.
A strange warmth, breathed from the brittle
cracklings of those dead things. Listen:
It is the same sound my heart
is making tonight.

Some people like gardens: Mystery
they think they've tamed. Some people
say they love the pine just as much
as the thrill of cutting it down.
The inconstancy of seasons fools us
every time. Compared to the nature of things
what can we know of promise?

✓

That finding we lose
What was never owned.
That returning we only come
To leave again, but differently.
This time you say, "Always. A rock." I go
To follow the snow underground:
Run-off down a mountain.
But you climb another **for** a better view.
From there you will see what I meant.
While the aspens turn to gold below you,
But above ground, my hands will be turning
To endless ribbons of lace. Already
They hang in your new windows.
That seeing through them
We close our eyes
Is only one more deceit.
That secrets are for stumbling upon.
That love is **easier** than lies.

✓

1919-1920

A time when everything seemed
was tried, and every movement—
like the growth of roots—
That finding we lose

There are ways to find what we need
if we only have the will to find it

That finding we lose
What was never owned.
That returning we only come
To leave again, but differently.
This time you say, "Always. A rock." I go
To follow the snow underground:
Run-off down a mountain.
But you climb another **for** a better view.
From there you will see what I meant.
While the aspens turn to gold below you,
But above ground, my hands will be turning
To endless ribbons of lace. Already
They hang in your new windows.
That seeing through them
We close our eyes
Is only one more deceit.
That secrets are for stumbling upon.
That love is **easier** than lies.

There are ways of finding things, like stumbling on them.

JAG →

That finding was lost
That was never found
That finding was lost
To leave a sign, and bitter sign
This was never found
To follow the slow and steady
In a soft downy mountain
But you still another one a better view
From there you will see what I meant
While the signs turn to gold below you
But above ground, the signs will be found
To endless ribbons of lace, always
They hang in your new window
That seeing through them
As close as eyes
Is only one more secret
That secrets are for stumbling upon
That love is easier than life

ALTHOUGH THERE WAS ONCE

A time when everything sighted
Was trued, and every movement—
Sure as the growth of roots—
Was sudden knowledge

Now thought comes with its own
Doubt, and action is like a falling
Of forest limbs, and memory
Is an old friend whose name
Has slipped your mind

Indisputably, and by a common sense
Which the common sense of the world

Is to be found, the world is a place
Never less unchanging, by reason

That they are in the world of things
They are named, measured, harvested,

Preserved.

WHAT HAS BEEN

What has been dreamt of and then lost
On each morning, what blends

With the white sky like light
Or like a blind man's memory

Is an apology. It takes form
Like clouds mimicking the world's

Geography, and then changes
Like the clouds. More difficult

To forget, the indignities
Never lend themselves to regret.

Taking refuge in the armor of blame
They are named, nurtured, harvested,

Preserved.

I WAS SPEAKING TO YOU

I was speaking to you.
It was not yet dark and I
forgot to say—yes it comes to me now
too late—the lines you taught me
all the nights you weren't here, rehearsals
you never showed up for, performances
unattended, when I dreamt
your hands applauding, a sound
like private laughter. I tell you
it was you I was speaking to
about the curtain, about the lights
and you were asleep
while I asked all this of you
stopping short of what I fear most
to mention, and then forgetting
what could make you feel
again

FALL

This is the season of wanderings,
when winds sweep salt
smells eastward through the streets
and carry off the voices from throats
before they can take form.

I am walking. It is early
or it is late. I warm my hands
with coffee on a stoop
and try to feel capable of anything.

I hope that I will hear
the sound of my own name
if it arrives on time.

Rain lights the sidewalks by reflection.
I stand beneath the dripping trees
waiting for you to call me home.

WINTER

At night I envy the lamp posts, each
Embraced by its own perfect
Whisper of lit mist, confident
Of warmth somewhere within.

At dawn snow is falling
From its sky. Yet the sky is all
That stays the same. So this
Is how wisdom hides from me
Even as it surrenders.

There Is A Star

There's a star where before
There was a life.
It casts a light that is not enough
To see by; nor can it leave
Behind it any shadow on the earth. Still
There are those of us who will have memories:
A shape, a movement, even a sound.

Here, now, although it is dark
There is a star
Bright enough to bring tears to the eyes.

For Billy Giunta

On Seeing the Northern Lights

They defy the order of colors, and the plans
of men. Don't you see that?
But no, the eyes were made to calculate
dreams, and to translate these
to the other parts of the body.
This is what drives the snow
to bed, finding there the damp
odor of loam, leaves
of endless years, the seasons,
the same weight that heats and deceives.
Bless us, we are innocent, time
after time: In the eye
lies the blindness to believe,
to judge darkness and light,
to preach, convert, repent,
to lend visions and borrow sight.
Something of us remembers each one of these
but it is not enough, and it doesn't matter
and outside the Northern Lights explain:
We had nothing to do with this
but we are better off, having seen.

DAVID

I am prayerless.

I remember only the coming home, the pointillist
Perfection with which things rose in me towards you
One after another like seeds, how effortless it was
For you. And now this: the lacuna

I will make a bargain.

No not with you, with the heart beating in the wound
The way the body can go on
Bleeding, the way days
Can be the same, or can end

With Her Eyes Open

Once again, ~~she~~ is dreaming
with her eyes open all night.
Though she's not alone, the bed
is terribly empty without you.
She thinks she sees the room
darken when you walk in,
your hand shaped like a bird
with feathers so soft they hurt her
when you come too close.
She's ready to talk now, to tell you
about the little things of sleep
that sleepers cannot know:
How fingers twitch like helpless children,
how she has these dreams that keep her
awake all night,
how in the dark she is afraid
that she hears songs she used to love.
But she says nothing, your face already turned
in leaving, in looking for something
she thinks you left behind,
and when the room becomes light
the bird is there, still, unable to fly.

Rest

It had been a long time
since I'd given any thought to the rest

I only thought life was like air
to someone falling through it

I only thought the stars hesitated
like trees at the edge of forests

I heard nothing but that rushing sound
until this sudden silence:

Then this is what the snow must feel
spending its first night at rest on the ground.

MOUNTAINS

Let's reconsider: Forget history, re-define
The boundaries. Now the mountains
Arrive unannounced and with you
In them. You say: Do you think I am going
To disappear? That's easy
For you to say, I say. Which of us, after all,
Is missing? For it's the mountains leaving
Without you that makes you hard to forget.
Listen when I try to warn you.
You, crickets, who have no idea how delicate
Your bones will be when flesh and song have left you.
You, lilacs, who will not recognize yourselves
In the gust of wind at dusk
Which steals your dark scent.
How is it on the other side? I don't know;
But I'm not exaggerating. This is too important.
I love you too much.

MOUNTAINS

Let's reconsider: Forget history, re-define
The boundaries. Now the mountains
Arrive unannounced and with you
In them. You say: Do you think I am going
To disappear? That's easy
For you to say, I say. Which of us, after all,
Is missing? For it's the mountains leaving
Without you that makes you hard to forget.
Listen when I try to warn you.
You, crickets, who have no idea how delicate
Your bones will be when flesh and song have left you.
You, lilacs, who will not recognize yourselves
In the gust of wind at dusk
Which steals your dark scent.
How is it on the other side? I don't know;
But I'm not exaggerating. This is too important.
I love you too much.

Why Winters Are Milder

It's gotten so even the robins stay all winter:
another symptom of how we hate to be cold, how
we fear loneliness. They too have begun to forget
when leaves left trunks standing slender
as the pale bodies of girls--
trees with the fire already waiting
inside them; begun to forget how spring
brought back the birds, who in turn sowed seeds
in the earth till green things grew there
like small gods. Our children
have become too timid to try
mud in place of shoes and socks.
The firemen
will never come again with snow
in their rounded hands.
But I know why the winters are milder
each year: it's the heat from bodies
like ours, yours pressed tight to mine like skin
on unripe pears, threatened
by the hope of seasonal similitude.

?

SEA AND MOON

Invocation

for DHK

The sea is jealous of the moon's
When morning opens its hands over foreign
cities, if I wonder about a few things
it's only because you are there.
I wouldn't think of these things otherwise.

Where the blueprints are kept up to date
are answers to all unanswerable questions.
They only say that mine is the same

as what is imperceptible as the motion
of glaciers or the growth of trees.
If this explanation were more complete
I wouldn't be bringing it up again.

Just to get it over with, just to break
the mere order of things.
The sea breathes: patient
as a woman waiting.

Alice B. Vignol
257 E 12 St
NY NY 10014

WHAT I'M NOT WAITING FOR

Listen to the stirrings of the thousand
Small animals no longer waiting.
SEA AND MOON Beneath the rafters

There has always been a storm.

It The sea is jealous of the moon's
Still as an old dog. No one remembers
How Tides, it sees the moon ebb and flow

Between its perfect boundaries.

The sea doesn't know the sky
Is an invisible land, and that the moon,
Filled with illusion, nightly weeps
Its hard edges into the dark

Water, wishing

To fall entire, like a hailstone,
To crash into what it coldly controls

Just to get it over with, just to break
The mute order of things.

The sea breathes: patient

As a woman waiting.

moot/mute

Alice B. Fogel
257 W 12 #5W
NY NY 10014

WHAT I'M NOT WAITING FOR

Listen to the stirrings of the thousand
Small animals no longer waiting,
Rusted into hiding. Beneath the rafters

There has always been a storm.
It bangs like a door with broken hinges,
Stiff as an old dog. No one remembers
How long it's been, how long

The ceiling has wept under its
Waterload, like a woman
Thinking no one is home.
It was another night, another
Promise, but now I'm not waiting.

I think that I will never find
What I'm no longer looking for.
But I could swear I saw it
Clearer once, the dark sky, its impossible
Stars, each one leaning down
To feed from my hand.