

Inland

Kevin Lennon

*And nobody gets out of it, having to
swim through the fires to stay in
this world.*

- Mary Oliver

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Storm

And of course
The biggest storms
Move across
The mind
Intractable tracts
Set aside
For fear
For dread
For grasping
Where the only birds that fly
We have conjured ourselves
Through mastery
And oblivion
Yet
They are
Terrible enough
To navigate
Those skies.

Night Birds

The time has come. A scent of song
On wings of form and soul
Up-ends the clotted summer
Now skies of slated grey
Make ink works of street.

We spill into winter like leaves
Through bunged-up drains
Stripped of our cheer. Still
We have fire to welcome
Still the vantage of fear.

What odds are these ? As worlds give birth
To worlds, as care comes wandering in,
It's boots of pewter valued high
By none, carried in waiting for
A secret life of joy. Take heart,
I hear, whispered from decimated tree -
It's clear, as is, our leaves are gone
Yet clearer still that we're still here.

Arrival

Out of water
through woods
through made space
from cracks on pond ice
to the old lane ways.

I float into the city a stray goose
the world defined again
each year in turn
comes round comes in -
loose garments at my side.

Home, then.

Home, it is.

This.

Earth.

Black Moths

I have crammed
So much
Into my mind
I have crammed
So much
Into my life.

Beatings broadenings
Meetings garglings
Pleasings leavings
Disasters puddings
Beginnings endings
La vie est parfaite-ings.

I have watched every wave breaking
Severed every gift waiting
Favoured ailments and stale-mate.
What's next ? I've always asked
What what what ?
What is the answer ?

(Is that what this is
In the long grass
As black moths
Come floating down the hill
Bound to settle
On whomever is lost ?)

Come

The bridge is here

Walk

Take your hands

In your hands

Throw your mind

To the edge

Catch your mind

Dance your legs

And cross

Cross

With all the journey

Your mothers father

And fathers mother

And mothers fathers fathers mother

And fathers mothers mothers father

Knew

Yes

And walk

And walk

You have come too far

To fear further.

Go

Go
Lie your head
On the great unknown.
Tip your hat
To all the viciousness
You are shocked to find
Is the world
And its makings.

Go
Walk your feet
Into the tide.
Bring flowers
And fruits of your labour
To the end
Of every road
Ever travelled.

Go
You are the only one
In this world
Who can.
With your heart
You will build
The only home
There has ever been.

This Life Is All Life

please
don't show me
who you think you are
who you want me to think you are

please
don't hang your person
like a painting
to be admired
and admonished
and abated

please
don't make of your grief
an opportunity
for denial

we are life
beyond everything
we could imagine
have imagined
are imagining

don't tell me
your truth
unless it is
your truth

don't stop crying
there have been so many centuries
of tearlessness
and strength
enough already
with the strength

be weak
be vulnerable
be a pink rose on a June morning
utterly at ease
with it's fragility
utterly entranced
with it's own unenviable is-ness
too busy with nothing at all
to take heed of everything

too perfect to ever consider
the abstraction
of imperfection

too empty
to ever consider
filling itself

be empty
this morning
be empty
as life.

Emptiness

How little a thing
Is said
When said
Of all the things
Of all the things
That are
O for a day
That is empty
Of ambition
Of striving
Of righteousness
And glory
Of form
And the formed
Of meaning
And the meaningful
Of praise
And derision
Of separateness
Of certainty
Of obligation
Of propriety
We are wind
In the valley
We are rain
On the window
Endlessly nothing
But the ways
Of our mind.

Outrage

Pain has walked me
Walked you
And you
And us
All
And
Some
To the ends of the earth
Here is the water
I was born in
Here is the air
You breathe
Here
And here again
Are the children we are
And our hearts are their hearts
And our tears their tears
And these words
Spoken first
In an old throat
That is our throat
That is choking
Look at the hills
And their throats of stone
And their hearts of stone
Their hearts
Of stone.

Song

There is no bridge to cross

That will not itself cross

That is not itself crossing.

A Bird Has Flown Into My Room

Though all the world
Can be a closed door
Can be a full stop
Can be a nightingale
Or a perfect thing
I have always been
The same thing
As the tides
The same thing
As the bees
As the nightingale
On a cool May morning
In childhood
When anything
Was possible
And everything
Was falling
And flying
And catching
And caught
Wrapped
In the unmistakable
Certainty
Of change.

Love

In my dream
Your face
Is so close to mine
I can see my pain
Reflected in yours
I can feel your pain
Echoing through mine.
Where has it all gone ?
I wake
In the deathness
Of the early morning
Opening the door of my room
Coming to find you
Coming to find
It all
That once was
Forever.

The Beauty Of Death

These few daffodils
In this cup
Withered now,
Hang.

More than gravity
Has weighted them
More than life
Has described them.

That this should be
As grief rises, is not
All that the mirror can hold.
At least,

That is what paints itself
Through this morning
Spring springing
In the greater room.

You Have Waited Billions Of Years

I am pleased to meet you in the morning
With spider web and dew
I am pleased to know you
Named after the moon

I will always know you
Even when you are lost again
Even when abandoned

With your own feet
You have grown

This life.

Wide River

Be that as it may -
I have come and gone
In the good rhythm of this world
In the fiercest tabernacle of mind.
What have I not been ?

This life comes drifting
Along the coast of my eyes
Into the deep blue
Origins of time
Along the road of answers

Through the wide river of the sky.

The Forgotten Shrine

Walking
I came to an old shed
Stepped bare-foot
Into its musk and shadows
(It had a coolness
In June
That marked it out)
Free of the hope
Of anything at all
Expecting nothing
From its lawnmowers
And fence posts
And nails in cans.

Then
It emerged as
A forgotten shrine
A practised hollow
Of corrugated iron
So perfect in its
Not-fit-for-purpose-ness
Its non-spiritual spiritual-ness.
I lingered a while,
My soles
On grease-flecked slab,
Then turned, stepped back out
Into all the forgotten shrines.

Inland

I rise to the sounds of the river
Plant stones in the moss
There is nowhere to go
Suddenly
It is easy
To go.

Through It All

Sometimes
When sleep comes
(July heat wave
Yoga mat on lawn
Head on old pillow)
It feels
Like the sleep of ages -
Perfect drift
Into emptiness
Into fullness
A relinquishing
Of everywhere
An arrival
Through elsewhere
(Elsewhere
Elsewhere)
The end
The beginning
This clear knowing
That you have always been
Through it all
So in love
So deeply
And fully
In love
With this life.

Reflection

Hello again
Still night
Hello dear heron
Knowing
Nothing
Need be known.

I have built
This herd of dreams
Licked
Phantoms
Bartered with no one
For everything.

Yes -
Sometimes
There is this
Perfect sadness
Sitting
So carefully
In the room.

This Day

Days are dreams, are they not ?
A wild wind of no-knowingness
A perfect, beyond-nothing limitlessness
The floating and falling edge of *things*
The placid and disastrous eventless-ness
The borrowed time on eternal loan
The fury and the lightness-of-touch
The sleep of wakefulness
The mildest extremity
O friend, earth, walked road
You have always been in perpetuity.

No Question

Following the streams of mind
That lead beyond themselves
To the nowness of all-time,

I have borrowed something
From that that has flowed here
That that has flowed from here,

I am gently nudged by more than memory,
By deep mystery that has come with no shape
And all shapes. I am here.

September Is My Favourite Month

I have been here
before

swam in the loose-knot of birdsong
before

gathered blackberries on high lonies
before

lilted along the path of turning
before

sewed dreams in sea spinach
before

wrestled night on lines of latitude and lines of longitude
before

tripped gallusly through cloud light
before

leafed leafed un-leafed
before

and still
this clear-edge joy

still
still

over and over
over and over

all this
all this.

Bringer

O earth
O borrowed form
Your perfection is elusive
Forever you have called my no-name
Forever unfolded your forking smile
A great crack on the skies limits
You, the weaver of the known.

And am I ?
In what field might I lie ?
In what rivulet might I find the one stone
That might be found ?
On what lane can I breathe you ?
O earth, these questions come
In the denseness of old industry
Far from the calling tide.

Crow

You are here in the room
And there on the shore
And wherever there is a road
You are at the end of it
I have always believed you to be sacred
Though you insist
You are nothing at all.

Who I Was

I did not go to the mountains

I did not park my body in the stone gap

Rather

I was the mountain

I was the stone gap

Is there any other explanation ?

White Flower

You,
Who move across the face of the void.

You, who,
On being born
Slip upwards
Through knotted briar.

And you,
Who walk on the walls of the mind.

And you,
Perfect white seed,
The red of your eyelet
A knitted song,
Your story - no story at all.

At Play

I have no name
I make not words
I come to the end of no road
And the end of all roads.

I see not seeing
I feel not flight
I am a game of myself
I am the death of my life.

I am the bread and the fire
I am the dancing wave
The names of numbers
The friendly grave.

I am, I am.
At play, at play.

No Return

There is nowhere you have been
That was not a returning

You have followed your own self
Through the veil of others

Day and night you have made ice in your soul
And always the ice melting

You have never returned -
You have never been away.

Peregrination

Was that me on the mountain pass ?

Me, the black bird, balanced on the wire in the wind ?

Me, the dark space beside the moon ?

Me, the sand running through the holes of the world ?

Was I the seeker ?

Was I the worm in the head ?

Was I the old sun and the new sun ?

Was I the rain on the oak ?

Was I the children of war ?

Was I the sleeping and the sleepless?

Was I the dreamt tomb ?

Was I the dreaming and the dreamed ?

Was I that one ?

As Is

I have waited.

Waited for you to come.

Now you are here, I am here as you.

Towards yourself you carry yourself, coming always from yourself.

You are not here.

This is not you.

This is you.

This “not-ness”.

This “not-ness” is you.

You have been here always, no-ways.

Can I say this to you ?

Am I not you saying it ?

Ambivalence

I am the walker on the long road -
Sometimes the hard edge of the winter moon,
Sometimes the crawl through black muds,
The falcon's sleep in the wren's nest,
Begetting the curve of the sky's spine.

Sometimes I am myself, too -
Alone in a room full of people,
Quietly hiding my shame,
Finishing my narrative
With customary pain.

Sometimes I am the light of the morning,
The piano played.
Sometimes I am not here at all -
Daydreamed pacific vines,
Soft sunshine on endless afternoons.

Sometimes I am the dreamer of these;
Sometimes the dreamed.
What way now, then ?
What way, if any ?
What does it mean ?

First Of The Spring Moons

Gathered from the ear of the universe,
The sound of the moon is the sound of forgetting.
Pain grows through the top layers, collapsing up into air.
And the moon, too, is the sound of remembering -
Breaking on the shores of ourselves, over and over.
Never has there been an absence of beauty,
No, not among the ruins of the heart. Of course,
It is the heart that grows, that breathes, that blossoms.
Do I dare let it be - this timeless ache, this sleepless joy.

The Life Of Life

You are the proof of your existence,
The happening of your disguise,
You are the device of your own giving,
The growth inside your growing.

You are not over yet; not yet begun -
The grass your universe,
The tide your glass,
You will drink when you have cause.

You will never have cause
Through all your causes.
You are the dead and the wind,
The carrier beneath you, the fall within.

I have borrowed you
In this instant,
I have made you my face,
Given and taken your perfect grace.

Where We Meet

All day the waves
moved through their own fullness.
And all night too.
And that
for as long as anyone ever knew.

I dreamed I fell down stairs,
saw myself broken at the bottom,
cried with all my fullness
to see
who I was when I was not.

All day the waves
moved through their own fullness.
And all night too.
And that
for as long as anyone ever knew.

Dream

There is always possibility,
Always the spurned endgame,
The sweetest light on the lightest morning,
The warmest wish on the coldest coast,
The feeling "endlessness",
Where endlessness is absent fear.

I have known my own mountain,
It's sheerness and shadow,
It's kindness and flowers.
Has there ever been anything else ?
I think, in the morning, there has been
Only love, it's edges an anonymous heart
Coming known, coming unknown.

You are this life. My heart, you are already complete.

From Where I Left Off

I didn't realise my childhood hadn't ended
until it ended one day in August
when I was 36
the soundtrack was Claus Ogerman's Symbiosis, Largo Pt. 1
with Bill Evans on piano
the sun was shining
at the same time
a light drizzle electrified my skin
cold sip of a late summer breeze
I wanted to cry
I wanted to WEEP
and I did
just a little
mostly
I was sad and glad
but mostly sad
and I realised that I'd always been sad
a little bit anyway and sometimes a lot
and of course there was family
there's always family
there's that
and in the fastest slowest kind of a way
I didn't know what to do
or what to say
or what to think
so I just kept sitting
in the sun
and the rain
with Bill Evans on piano
through the little speakers on my phone
there's something I want to say now
but I don't know what
there's something I want to speak of

but I don't know what
of course, I do know
because it's what we all talk about
even when we're not talking about it
love, isn't it ? Love.
it's a fine world for letting go
a fine world for picking up
from where you left off.

I Walked Into My Life

I walked into my life
I had no hands
not any
I recognised
nor knowledge
nor knowing
I was the structure
the structure was good
all good
arrived
once
for all
no past
only memory
this root fire
I was not self nor not self
I walked into my life
how could I have known
I would have to walk out
how does any one of us
know
how that's done ?
fall apart
fall together
you have never kept yourself
it is not in your nature.

The Ghost

Far off
At sea
There is a glimmer
Of a shadow
It makes noises
On the ear
It harbours itself
Closes in at night
For a better story
Picks knots
With warm hands
Lends itself
To wind
To prayer
To war
It knows the centuries
And more
It knows it all
But never tells
It never lets itself in
It climbs every highness
To feel it's eyes
It doesn't know
What it is
If you're still
And quiet
And curious
You might find it
One evening
In your skin.

Patience

I have known you
under the cold moon
at the edge of the woods
where the shore starts its chatter
where there is nothing to say
save what's said in water -
salt tears that make a path to what's past
where grief has opened its invisible eyelids
knowing it has only patience to meet
over and over over and over
knowing what emerges
it cannot know.

The Human

I press my face against January
the soft hard moon the catacomb
of winter and the dark
the words felt on the lips
silence springing from the black ground
the watched heron watching back
alive in me alive in this
the dark the dark the dark
I inch my way over forming ice
down here in the night shadows
I have no desire
this is dreamt and
the dreaming is the dream
I reach my eyes
find the stars the fireside
the heat of the cold
a miracle is everything
all here all here all alive
I breathe my way home
the human home among
the stars the space the silence
I am the first and the last
and the slow fading structure
I hold myself against myself
and whisper: I alone am.

Dandelion

This is not a poem
Not words
On the page
Not letters not ink not sounds
In the room
Not sounds
In the mind

This is not a poem
Isn't something structured
Not conceived
Isn't a message
Isn't a cry for help
Isn't the burning heart
Or the quenching soul
Or the roundabout of lies

This isn't a poem
Or a meditation
A reflection
Or an offering
Isn't a cosmos
A conflagration
Or a dandelion

This isn't a poem
No
Nor a line of inquiry
Not a life's work
Not a life undone at the hinges

What is it then ?
What is it ?
You tell me
Please
You tell me.

Mirror

My life is a dark field
A January 4-o'clock dark field.

Blackbird

one day in April
when the green flame was growing
I sat in the back garden eating toast
with butter and coffee
the blackbird was watching
out of the fullness
of the corner
of his eye
I watched back
leaving nothing out of the moment
already recalling it from an imagined future
in that, the imagined past
what remains now
in the moment's written moment
is the joy felt - the joy of knowing
what was watching was inseparable
from what was watched
the blackbird returned to the trees
in the morning I will look for him again
and every morning after.

When

And at once
There is death
I reach for my own hand
In my own hand
I sleep
As the years move across me
Growth doesn't make itself known as information
On the brain's closed roads
Rather it becomes my skin.
In the novel there is a road lit by lamps
In the painting there are trees
I will make it across myself someday.

Awake

And the eyes of the little bird
The one who came
In the midst of the fear and abandonment
The one that keeps flitting
From branch to generation
From generation to branch
Wondering who'll come
After all these millennia
Who it'll be
To see it
To know it
To love it
To be it.

Ocean

I wear an azure blue t-shirt in the morning
eat my toast and peanut butter
in the garden
where the bees are
every day
they think my azure blue t-shirt
some perfect flower
they nuzzle up
meet my waving hand
ushering elsewhere
O that I was some perfect blue flower
without hands
without poetry.

Honeysuckle

gathering the road with my legs
I sweep honeysuckle into my eyes
settle on hedgerows and shores
with nettles for hands
and ferns for arms
was I always this ?
did I keep myself in this dream
with a whispered knowledge
forgotten and known again ?
there is a road on the earth
hands join across its stones
rain-rivers paint it's edges
the world remembers itself.

The Sea

I can't do it
I say to myself
Sometimes
I say that
Sometimes
I mean it
Sometimes
I'm not so sure
Sometimes
I remember how
I navigated it
Before
That's enough to stop me dead
In my tracks
Yes, oh yes
Would I have it any other way ?
I ask myself
Sometimes
I can't decide
If the answer is yes
If the answer is no
Navigating love
Is my favourite thing
Say a billion
Who're gone now
I'll be among them
Sometime
So
I point the boat to sea
And call *storms won't stop me*
I point the boat to sea
Terrified, dancing, alive
The waves and depths my company.

