

CONTENTS

[Train of Thought](#)
[light and dark alone are waste](#)
[Seattle](#)
[The Uselessness of the Common or Garden Variety of Experience](#)
[Feeling is touching](#)
[Sometimes I hardly know which one of us I am](#)
[Cassandra](#)
[love me occasionally](#)
[A Leaf for Sarajevo](#)
[The morning fills me as a running river is filled with sunbeams](#)
[Spring, the Present](#)
[Transformations](#)
[I want to talk to you of work](#)
[Yeats](#)
[Song](#)
[Men](#)
[You call me back when I recall the past](#)
[to one away in Africa](#)
[All this talk! And maybe if I lived](#)
[I don't know how](#)
[this loveliest](#)
[Fear of Eros](#)
[The organ plays in a thousand arching churches](#)
[The danger of feeling is in this, that](#)
[Brook and Stone](#)
[This brooding weather of warm mists, grey showers](#)
[On a wet branch song](#)
[Ferns through a blue jar](#)
[Sometimes when it gets too much](#)
[Venetians](#)
[Morning](#)
[Breaking Up](#)
[Grief](#)
[I send sprays](#)
[the cold epidemic](#)
[I have no tears for you, lovers](#)
[Moving](#)
[The heights of the yellow hills are straight](#)
[the apartment is falling to ruin](#)
[what I want is control](#)
[problem children](#)
[Exile](#)
[No, she cried](#)
[Anger at Time and Space](#)
[I can never do it](#)
[After James Shirley](#)

[Song](#)
[Afraid](#)
[Dusk](#)
[Window Decoration](#)
[Pissaro](#)
[Life Comes Flying](#)
[I am death. I steal upon old men](#)
[Who can you turn to](#)
[Old Dreamers](#)
[For My Sister](#)
[I have determined by lessening](#)
[One wakes when I have wakened](#)
[snake eyes and medusa hair](#)
[Mary](#)
[Years](#)
[On a wet branch song](#)
[Sleek and stiff and new the horse gallops](#)
[Among the branches](#)
[Narrowly vivacious](#)
[Lisa Giacometti](#)
[The Page](#)
[The grass](#)
[inscription under a woman poets photograph](#)
[absurd broccoli whose](#)
[Mourning](#)
[the pastels used by Mary Cassatt](#)
[Here](#)
[The Eternal Garden](#)
[HAPPY EASTER](#)
[the lessons hardest to learn](#)
[Eclipse of the Moon](#)
[To My Sister Marcia](#)
[Orpheus and Eurydice](#)

Train of Thought

a poem's a locomotive.
immediately you have made
the decision you are picked up
still moving. Inside you are still
while the machinery carries
along, louder without than within.
you all know what it looks like, fast
and linked and black, and all the same
because of speed. Correct, too, and
invisible, since from outside
it might be the same one each time,
and from the windows outside looks
like inside, so blurred, except when
reflections false the distant hills.
you're carried along, wondering
what you are, and free to, since

the rhythms and the vehicle
go on, and just when you've thought it
all out, knowing somewhere the time
is almost up, destination
almost stopped, the desert field stands
in front, beside, the decision
has come to an end. then, lightened,
you descend, greet the friends who look
nearly the same, and in their light
intrepid exciting new place
almost forget that you travel.

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

light and dark alone are waste.

snow drifts through all the parted streets
where in the cloudshine atoms meet
and whirl along a pearly space

your hands are in the parallel
of separated beams that lie
falling upon the dusk, the light
of streetlamps, falling where snow falls.

and we live in the play of dark
fastening cold to circling cold
that no sun's light embrace could hold
or fuse in any brilliant spark

and in this whirling of our fears
the beam within the fall of snow
and all the dark around still grow
luminous with the salt of tears.

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Seattle

rhododendron
is a tree here.
stand like a leaf.
back yards plummet
to Italy
and domestic
waters reflect
Swiss precision
in blue Cascades.
cedars drop nine

o'clock sunlight
Pacific time.
dim outlandish
Isles rise. facets
Of the Watcher
Appear, moon-mapped.
stand like coastal
latitude. Fall
into the Sound
that is silent.
desire comes here
like night ferries,
gold in wet black;
art is brusque as
Olympic grass.

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

The Uselessness of the Common or Garden Variety of Experience

One doesn't look at the rose,
however restrained, to show
how the violet should be seen.
however vegetable-like,
the peony. Sun will strike
the gnarled, uneven string bean
before one is prepared, glow
in the mind before one knows.
There is no onomato-
peony among growing
things. Each is its own cabbage-
rose, its own duality.
Sometimes the pollen will see
or seem to, one's own courage
standing still before going
wind-borne toward the tomato.

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Feeling is touching

Knowledge, thoughts, and dreams
come through our fingers. Hands that ever
reach
see all, strong, bitter as bark, dark in the rocks.
Joy is an arc, and constant happiness
tangible horns high in the summer air.
Manipulate, control, encircle, hold,
see change, learn truth through what our hands

enclose.

Ever most precious, stillness is ecstasy
under our fingers. Silent minds to touch
yearn their lives long. We but approach this trust
as, motionless and concentrate, we strive
to touch with lips like hands the bidden fruit.

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Sometimes I hardly know which one of us I am.

Do I awake at eight? Have you nothing to do?
Does one of us smoke? Who writes the poems?
Sometimes I think we're here to play this game.
Sometimes you're us both and I just make the forms.
Most of the time I stitch overhand into you.

The rainy trellises, the sun through ferns, are
threads
Cutting us into each other, nourishing the joint.
Skies are broad roads on which we meet in grace.
Heads, blond, dark, love, anxiety — heads.
And sometimes I am just a little space
allowing you room. Or I'm my own heart's poison
point.

What times we have! Is it glorious, this impossible
balance?
But we are quick on our feet, and if we trip, or
grow
Too fast, I'll write it out for us. A poem without
moment,
without an overture, no occasional dance,
something the trees knew, something the sunset sent
without a title. — How that sounds like you!

Sometimes, like today, I think you're the whole
thing,
I'm a scribe asleep in the bright Egyptian sun
copying inspiration in effortless feathery curves.
This is a new way of loving to sing.
You are the poems my form and background serve.
And one of us is the tears that keep us one.

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Cassandra

When you know no one is within call,

when the fire you caught with such glad rage is old,
when wind in the scatternested chimneys whispers,
Fall,
Take down these lines, and weep for what I told.

O weep, for when I sang or painted Spring
Winter was halfway halted in his tread,
and when I spoke of tempests, birds that sing
in morning sunlight were my muse of dread.

I always loved you. I cannot foresee
whether this truth to your farseeing eyes
shall shine a beacon or a mystery
hidden within the truth of my words' spies.

But I am tired. You are the rain tonight,
you, who have taught me birds and Springs are fair,
Winters and tempests wracking to their height
only because of Helen's golden hair.

I am no one. All the future and the past
sift through me. Yet I love, and bear no curse
for blinding prophesies that hold me fast
you have borne out already in my verse.

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

love me occasionally

not in euphoria
only the heart
remembers at all
heroes are killed
each day in Pretoria
we stand beside them
we watch them fall
touch me kindly
not in euphoria
only the flesh
remembers at all

touch me kindly
not in euphoria
the sick are dying
or getting well
Rockefeller's in
the Waldorf Astoria
we're in Vietnam
and Vietnam is hell
love me occasionally

not in euphoria
only the flesh
remembers who fell

only the heart
remembers the bitterness
only the flesh
remembers the pain
love me occasionally
not in euphoria
touch me kindly
and touch me again
heroes are killed
for less than this kindness
in Haiphong harbor
the mines are rain

teach me occasionally
over and over
how to love
and how not to die
to remember and
how to remember
how to ask why and
to ask why
teach me over
the noise of the bombers
that blacken out
the clear blue sky

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

A Leaf for Sarajevo

Sorrow city, Sarajevo
thus your history is traced,
your museums laid in rubble
and your life almost erased,
this destruction, Sarajevo,
for which the whole world is braced.

Sarajevo, sister city,
with a sorrow so like mine,
as I wait and lean and listen
for an answer or a sign:
sorrow glistens, Sarajevo,
like a message or a line.

Sitting shiva, Sarajevo,
for your temples and your mosques

but the world will not recover
as it waves from brave kiosks
knowledge that the worlds has faltered,
altered. Look, my sister asks.

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

The morning fills me as a running river is filled with sunbeams

or a room, white curtains blowing, the busyness of
motes in light,
and the light is warm, and the motes swarm, never
leaving the pathway.
My body is so awake it dreams in the sunshine.
Remorseless, no darkness.

I will go out and down the river of streets in the
sun
changed to a form, a block of blue and black,
dreaming colors into the room
where the light is white, and the buildings move
on a wave, never leaving
their wakefulness in dreams. These streets will
become remorse,

my sorrow. I will be young and free, floating on
the wave of coming and leaving,
those rooms lapped with my gay tears will cluster
in blocks of blue light,
sunlight, a crowd of pathways and strong, quivering
lights,
lapped with my darkness, awake. I will touch every
sensation awake.

The day will be floating and free, and I will be
lost in the river
of dark rooms and bright skies, brilliant and still,
never ceasing, absorbing
my ecstasy of sorrow and light; or, pointed,
scenting, awake, my body
loses color, gains form, mourning this living
beauty.

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Spring, the Present

It's the season when I see what people mean.
A hemlock branch is catching the caught light

in a jar so clearly full of memories
it enlarges like a trompe d'oeil or realism
of oils. The honeysuckle is vandalized too
from the public road, and wilder because more free.
When will I stop seeing that I have it
all your way and you have it all mine?
And Henry James is as clear as cut glass, books
where no one knows what anyone else means
and everyone acts accordingly. I can't
believe it: one doesn't have to, because it's true.
I see what people mean in saying, "It's worthwhile
if you feel you're being enlightened," and I wasn't.
I see what people meant about the season.
In spring I never knew I never knew.
I don't know how the jar's opaque light far side
Suddenly glows with the minutiae reflected,
what's next to it, becoming photographic
like lamplight through a scene on a shade, but
realer,
of its own depth, unprojected. You see what I mean.

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Transformations

Transformations are real.
We know this because they take time.
The greater the number of transformations
occurring in a spoken sentence, the more time
it takes for the hearer to understand it.
Good evidence for this comes out of tests
in which the hearer is asked to term
a given sentence true, or false.
An example is the sentence:
"Canaries are birds," to which the hearer
responds quite quickly, "That is true,"
and "Birds are canaries,"

to which the speaker says, more slowly, "False."
Non-truth statements contain more transformations
to understand. Amelie says this is intuitively
true, to her: that she responds more slowly
to some statements than to others. This is true.
Good evidence for this is that she told me
two nights ago at dinner, when she'd called me
saying, "I feel as though I'm underwater,"
and I had been afraid all my transgressions
could not reform themselves by a single statement
like, "I'm quite capable of listening
to those who've listened to me," but still had gone

and talked of everything under the sun
and finally even myself, reduced to normal,
forgetting Amelie was anything
but Amelie, and she, being there, and listening,
as usual, said, "Sometimes it takes more time
for me to absorb some statements and respond."
She also said she thought things like this needed
to be said so that the other speaker
would understand that she was listening,
and would respond, but that it took more time.
An example of a quick response
to a truth statement is that I replied,
Of course. I think that people understand that.

In New York this Saturday Natasha
showed me these tests of time and transformations.
I had not seen Natasha in four years.
She has a child now, left psychology
to learn cognition, as I'm leaving English
to do linguistics. What she said helps prove
Chomsky is right, and transformations real.

Yet when I called tonight, and Amelie
said that these tests confirmed her intuitions,
I said, though speechless, nothing more confirming
than, Yes. What all my heart and memory
confirmed underwater, remained, and was unsaid.
After,
I thought of Roy's answering, when I asked,
after some new, departmental miscalculation,
"Why is it all so fucked up?" "I don't know,"
with love and happiness, "but it is," and I
thought, Then I'm right that all our schedules
aren't working
and he turned and walked away, and left me
suddenly lovingly and happily knowing
we meant everything, and to each other.
Can I not say, the next time, tomorrow
to Amelie, "It's true?" We know a question
takes many transformations and much time,
and truth statements and affirmations, little.

I can be more like Roy and more like Amelie
now that even Natasha, who, remember,
was in psychology four years ago,
and had not child, is more like me. That's true,
Birds are canaries and also other birds.
For I'd respond more quickly, I laughed to Amelie,
To the false statement, and I'd say it's true.
My old psychiatrist once said to me,
sweat pouring from his metaphorical brow,
"I could say the moon's made of green cheese

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

