

# FEBRUARY 25

and .  
and ,  
and ,  
and .  
and you

## DECEMBER 2

*for Ted*

and distracted, jumping from dictated French beds,  
beds of sentences, shoved up against beds of remembering tea or  
neurosis, to buying an armful of branches but not buying the tree  
where the owl therefore lives on, undisturbed, in forest's "swag"

and alive, ignoring for now some monologues and the call of  
beds being made and ranking all visitors by their corners  
as managerial approach to suitors whose successes have, after all,  
not been predictable by their kindnesses, untuned, not even song,  
but which do matter

and matter, converted from back to shoulder, liquid matter,  
the bag definitely exists, has seven pockets, but the books inside,  
though there, don't take the form they would if I would  
open them, not becoming journal, at most to do list, but one where  
the tasks aren't mine but the reading is

and open, stretched spine, to the next thing worth thinking,  
the syntax of a not-yet-friend whose lines can introduce another's style  
without capitulation to it, I thought that, too, but could not  
be open to my putting it awkwardly in public

and you, the motivation for day's distractions' lively  
openness to mattering addressed to you in borrowed clothes that  
you could not name, a villanette or whatever and a walk,  
calm matter in a painless assisted gait, you appeared  
and said the nuns' rebuilt spire could yet fall again

*Rainer Diana Hamilton*

## DECEMBER 3

*for Rainer Diana*

and collected, feelings of being around,  
around the operative word, while around unvisited tombs or  
even desired, John whose memorial is fucked under and John whose words  
say simply, “To be casual and to have the wish to heal”

and “The heart / is too far buried in the sand / to tell,”  
around a repetition and turning stretches of sand  
falling from one chamber to the next, stream together to form a picture,  
that heartening which is rendered so clearly, how after enough time  
a bone heals

and healed, resolved to better health which is still entropy, healed like *that*,  
—it’s in the bag (so to say)—an open form or a form to empty first  
and shake out all that could be healing to start again from the unhistoric acts of  
oneself, a censer of loves and hates swinging in time, a matter of opinion  
that knows us better as students

and time, when the students among us are diffused from  
what couples us here, wage or perspective, like San Juan  
viewing his Christ’s body from above before dropping from the window  
to meet them, to lay the hair of the beloved God upon his breast

and that poem, met in resurrecting a collection of the heart’s lines  
healing over time, which is to say endless when absence  
is lived with, unmet and the saintly courtyard emptied of mortal witness  
so the spirits can inhabit freely, and your closed eyes turn in their annex  
that poem when you are writing yourself

*Ted Dodson*

## DECEMBER 5

and chatty today, sending psychic cat messages  
messages unsent, unthought of or pocketed  
quiet where hands go but not so quiet  
in the mind I slip green like a pocket to hold

some days another lines the insides, other times  
the day goes by in independence, turning colors  
over in the dark, in case they mean  
something again

and thought grows darker, painted  
nails in gloves, where daylight hasn't slipped  
in around hands, rehearse my message  
wearing Oppenheim's gloves inside out  
intentions, with luck, grow out before they chip

and, look, again the paint, material, has decided again  
to mean something as the cat means something  
"in his way" where again occurs regardless of  
lighting, not the paint, the daylight, but the  
others coming near + near approaching

and gestures, affected, the hand's wardrobe  
hovering the periphery of my nude green bath  
new life as a charm when used beyond use  
where we go from here, I've had it sideways  
use is the gesture but also the foreground  
hands are foremost for petting, and don't I forget it

and you, the relief of your side in the dark  
the once again and the gesture with you, not with paint  
which is the words of this I use to approach  
again unpocketed your smiling hand, as you text  
yourself to pet this poem

*charles theonia*

### JANUARY 3

and surrounded, escaping worries on a waterway of influence,  
influenced by friends and their postures and even by influence's promise or  
lie that nothing is finally mine, ungrounded nothings evening into  
an open ear, such as, just now, "coitus interruptus LAPD is a drag"

and resigned, not to a consequence of song but to the flood of  
influences flickering under my life, that nameless singing  
whose upshot is surrender to form's hotness, intention meant and met, a  
resignation, finally, from the contented idea that my repetitions are  
fated, not free

and free: the other day, free all morning, I went to see  
the last show Peter Schjeldahl ever saw, a swarm of photographs, a theory  
of photography as spending unscarce resources unhindered  
by the artifice of titling, and what was the content of this freedom but  
repeated seasons and aversion to text

and titles, ours, each delays a fretful manumission, feeling  
from form, but perhaps a name is just a pose, a strong angle on  
a wayward body—and body and angle, object and facet,  
title and essence all fruits left to ripen in the same paper bag

and you, my title, my resignation, my interruption, give me  
the freedom and the duty to surround my promises with one  
name and feel the dragging repetitions of one day, not the true  
span but the mark, not what you saw but what scarce time let you  
put down, as when you pose me for that photograph

*Vinson Cunningham*

## JANUARY 4 - 8

and a blue ghost with a huge ass, the whole thing looks like a bowling pin without a base only bigger and curved, a pin with an ass and a cartoon scribble for a mouth, she's constantly getting out of bed and beckoning me to follow her but it seems absurd and then I think I did that already why do I need to do it again

and engaging in a mock battle with women who are opposing my team, they sit on risers like they're the audience in a play and we play-act our fight with them like *Edward II* by Derek Jarman except all women, they sort of look like Audrey Wollen and when we touch each other with swords at vital points it's supposed to represent death only when I do it to the three or four laughing women who are attacking me they don't "die" and then when i'm supposed to be indignant the taller graceful Audrey character touched my wrist with a sword and i don't "die" either

and a major cultural difference particular to North Carolina according to which people both receive and make a point of hunting down these multicolored tokens, they look like pastel candy corn but they aren't edible and then later you trade them in for drinks and food at the local microbrewery so really I say you're just accepting part of your wages in another currency one that's only good for beer but you and another girl say well you're not from here you don't really get it and later it's a sex dream and you turn in the tokens for rides at the local Vanderbilt-owned amusement park called the Bildung

and two women in early middle age, sisters, they look as if animated by Alex Katz, discover that in conversation with other people each can hold herself still for a second longer than necessary, stare for a second longer than everyone else, although it was disconcerting to witness you could never be sure she was really doing it, like perhaps the animator (Alex Katz, God) had just slowed or blurred your vision, in a way it was a semi-private effect and everyone observing the sisters thought that they personally were experiencing a druggy blip in the pacing of reality where really two 30-something brunettes were conspiring to put a private language into practice. it slowed conversation down, they said when confronted about it, and after all why did it matter we aren't so very attractive (Jerry Seinfeld in conversation with them hotly disagrees) and people didn't look that closely anyways. Now that I, Jerry Seinfeld, can see the effect I can't unsee it, I see them do it while they pull the books off my shelf, I see it while I walk with you up the exit ramp for an Appalachian gorge

and you are host to this poem I am the mother of many children I live illicitly in a hotel in Toronto like my grandfather's apartment; I'm helping Sarah accomplish a task, she's unhappy, i'm buying her a large bottle of vodka and then I have to have it delivered to her apartment as room service. Sarah and Jasmine and David are in this apartment above me, which also looks

like my grandfather's. I can't get past the doorman; I weep and use an initialism many letters long, which turns out to mean that I have many children but custody of none of them. they enter the dream and beg for attention. one can't walk up the stairs and there's at least one set of twins. it's not clear how many children I have, only that it's a brood and the oldest whom I love the most is only 3 and you are emphatically not the father

*Kay Gabriel*

## JANUARY 7

and fixed, to slow a petering out part of personality,  
or personality's inability to show itself before others despite wanting  
to have it split like a mussel who arrives undesignated  
to a party to get stuffed before shared, some vip guest

and chill, to make loudspoken the possible, possible murder at  
party, the impossibility felt when thud a body appears  
stopping the two guests kissing in, yes that's your bedroom, and a possible  
non-deletion with everyone in, standing there by the two vases, full of flowers, still

and twenty minutes left, enough to make what's less than tv with a candle,  
Hannah, Claudia, Nicole, Memory, Spit, Phone Sex, Feb 25, *Cosmogony*,  
*To the Lighthouse*, *Getting Lost*, a printout of "February 25,"  
postcard, notebook, bottle of Schweppes, and wallet, grow  
quick in moments and for storage for good on paper

and shrinking, or what is the desire for it to do in me,  
not overthink it, I just want be clear, you see, and no I don't  
literally mean shrinking; this verve stuff, it's not part  
of my personality yet, you get me doc

and so then another one, the correlation of the fixedness the chill the urgency and the shrinking  
no changing part of it, wherein a backyard is something it  
isn't, not almost but completely: this unrare activity of occupying a poet  
made form instead of the old part of one's mind, this result  
still unshrunk, big like memory, so nearly a poem.

*Shiv Kotecha*



## **FEBRUARY 11**

and sitting, thinking on the train of the ease with which  
those around me hold their bodies, and myself ignorant envious  
of their ability to move through the writhing of being always on the edge  
of breaking down or wondering, as if held too long a stranger's eyes

and breaking, under the pressure of too much,  
this communal space, where one could ignore but hold together  
were only 'theirs' as in everyone else, who had certain rights  
granted them when I was somewhere else, mistaking love for others  
in my afraid but desperate need to appear

and standing, breathing too close to a stranger,  
still this ability to disentangle from a sense of another or  
in this case multiple, on the train to Bedstuy to pick up a book  
from a friend, and feeling the desire to shrink my own body  
to a point of light, or something you can remember without effort

and remembering, bringing this simple image to mind that appears without need  
to interpret or assign a particular significance, as if there were nothing greater,  
than this moment in which its presence, the mental image gaining solidity,  
taking place alongside you, that daydream of memory

and beginning, to place yourself in that field  
remembering a place you've never been, but the sweetness of the grass  
in sunlight on which you can place a coat or blanket, feeling  
an unseasonable warmth in the air or watching, say  
a flock of pigeons flying against a sky without clouds  
and therefore without movement, except in the poem you make by being there

*Joey Yearous-Algozin*

**To the reader on Feb. 25, 2023**

and stupid, even so, it really isn't such a big deal, once you —  
and I mean you, in this case, not one, — stop for a second  
to actually think about what could go wrong here;  
not nothing but not everything either, stop worrying

and mistaken, fine. but does not count as a catastrophe,  
just the sort of thing that happens to people, like when  
you leave the keys in the door or your wife or the lights or stove  
or your camera on, even if by accident, while unzipping

and sinful my god! clearly it's a joke, but archness  
only goes so far before wearing out or it gets hard  
to get over the idea that your friend could — meant impersonally,  
both you and the friend, who you probably already hate —  
actually be serious re: conversion, just lacks follow through

and withholding, in fact, makes sense but does not mean  
that it's going to make anything better if you're just planning  
(in the loose, but please not the impact-not-intent sense)  
to keep getting by and off on self-denial.

and the stupidity, the mistakes, the sin, the withholding:  
it's all in there, but it's not even clear that it's hypocrisy,  
and anyway, if it is, what comes next: just because you get off  
to poetry means you need to go out and become a writer?  
sometimes it's fine not to reciprocate.

*Elena Comay del Junco*

## FEBRUARY 25<sup>th</sup>

Across the sill a window to superfluous time  
perhaps something empty like a bowl perched on it  
or some self-help book with a self-congratulatory title  
which has been purchased but won't be read

some correlation of the parts of the self you can  
partially see a woman tilting her head  
to the side yearning for a more fruitful slut season  
amidst the grinding churn of the rise of fascism

her little desires clarifying like what exactly?  
earbuds tilting in her ears an audiobook narrator  
voicing Circe—*the hours were nothing to me*—watching  
mortals age—*apples in a bowl, wrinkling and shrinking* — Now

I've said the opposite of what I mean Time is not  
passing it is slowed or stuck  
slowing like August afternoons or Sundays but also  
revving up again as soon as someone comes

home as soon as something within her comes to be  
at rest as soon as the right person texts  
back and the certainty of things picks up  
and she can forget herself enough

*Marina Weiss*

**Feb 25**

Silently heckling our so-called resemblance,  
my body's double wouldn't progress, would check with me first,  
that's good, it's where we meet at least

Hiss silently against them, these innocents  
had less to do with me and you said die  
and slurred yourself, they peer down nothing in their faces

Steering my ass to comprehension, to silently  
teaching the me with the remnant of you,  
learning and objecting my every stance

Ease me now, now you are, in such rhythms I use with latitude,  
describing difference like a squeaky wheel

However we thought to keep going, the rest  
were reminders of the same, distributed and forgotten

*Isabelle Olive*

**Feb 25**

and we'd wished someone would have told us about that  
kind of terror I've known ways of sneaking out or  
not being found, how did we play it back then the tape  
ran and ran until we forgot a recording was being made

and is that better to be unaware, probably, though it also  
documents shards of trajectories we don't yet understand  
I was saying something about plants and what it means  
to care for them and then it turned into a conversation  
about what it means to be seen and witnessed not caring

and misunderstood because sometimes buried within not caring  
is a very deep kind of concern for life and things that breathe  
and for the self I'm remembering now when your mother  
told me a little bit of ego was good how it stuck in my mind  
that she thought I needed to hear her say it to me

and how does one get to a point in life where the self is a  
shameful thing to revere and its all tied up in money which  
is a bit obvious but that's where we are now in that bliss state  
where the most beautiful ones are the simplest ideas

and you and you and you, how they convinced us that  
the idea of the "other" was a radical philosophical stance  
as if we hadn't been playing that game forever each push  
against a disparate being relearned many times over

*Anna Gurton-Wachter*

**Feb 25**

*for Anna Gurton-Wachter*

and improbable, that I imagined a day a little like  
paradise, to do nothing, say nothing to almost  
anyone, no suggestion of movement  
on earth, except when Michael Palmer says “minerals caked on the edge of the glass” and a text  
message rings, hi Anna, and a little plan for the future

and funny, I made this video of  
paradise once, low resolution in green and  
brown, some ocean salt and trees, the after-version tells me  
no more no less, though I do return to it and do miss it

and missed, walks in cold  
places that occur somewhere off  
the page, and the blue hill where  
we said we never would again, what then

and then, the cores of apples  
are still on the roof and love is singing  
twin-scents, the day at a distance  
is ending in spring, they’re walking around laughing  
and dodging raindrops

and ending now, we will start our  
routine earlier tonight, you will  
sit down forever into the bath while  
I get the sponge, brush your hair, kiss you goodnight  
secretly waiting to write this poem

*Alexis Almeida*

**FEB. 25 2023 2:27 P.M.**

and lost, surrounds something that was so positive,  
not involved in a kind of mourning, even thought to follow myself or  
at least what once was myself but rehashed, gloss-bulb  
cordoned off and rewound our waists we'd wound, felled

and loved, sharing a living place but lottery's made love  
of gravity only, never a mean to contrast pleasing & devolving,  
painted him as a child from a photograph I know, to write another  
letter, imperative, steam-tunneling, would rewetted like his cash  
experiences his hands in his pocket my fist stays

and experiences, not performing the work how I wanted to,  
see dashes for eyes and keep heaving to reach the end  
of the night, 50 yards away a brittle black and heavy revolver gets to predict  
heart of a child, dark and stormy, needles and pins, heart  
laid preformed and lies, one of aversion then cruel on an object

and unformed, also to sort of "side-shadow" rather than back-shadow  
that outs me in a moment of history that's quite exciting that always  
leads to networks of other players, wait in silk I pasted, in ease  
I have appealed while unwanted but she walks to bed puts flower on bed

and you, of the redwood trees, protecting women as they are  
arrested and shoved together to get to the end, to lose  
the end of the love, experience lying, your form, if revolution  
be the same, surprising, not much has happened since I've seen you last,  
from our fully lived cradle I wept at the color

*Corina Copp*

## **FEBRUARY 25**

and resourceful, succumbing to the most secure fantasies,  
fantasies of not writing, even fantasies of being scared or  
unhappy, careful what words I use but not so careful what words  
of other people stick in my mind, as if, "in trouble"

and loved, denying at the least a desire & a swing  
of fantasies evolving & getting lost in the intimacy of desire  
as only one's own, not shared, and at the most an assertion of  
that love which can be rendered, almost picked, for a portrait,  
it is so clear

and clear, I had even anticipated the bookbag, clear as that,  
not in doubt that, what I want or even need, but doubt that space  
of energy where this clarity remains intact without violation of  
the poses, not of that portrait, one of assertion, but of the  
others standing still & still watching

and poses, my own, of the body's exhibition of strength,  
the agility that performs around the exact center of a mesmerizing  
talent for the new, & now I've said the opposite of what I mean,  
this is the pose but it is also the strength

and you, the correlation of the resourcefulness the love the  
clarity and the pose with you in the arc of the painting that  
is being made, in an obsession to be exact again & that is,  
clearly happy in a state of our own possession, as you possess  
yourself when you are writing that poem

*Bernadette Mayer*



On December 1, 2022, Ted texted this poem of Bernadette's and asked "is this [form] something she made up or is this something i should know." We weren't sure—if it's a pre-existing form, we couldn't ID it—but the specific repetition (the "clear" at the end of stanza 2 becoming the repeated term of stanza 3, and so on; the "and [adjective]" construction) was appealing. We agreed to each try to describe the form to ourselves and then use it.

To join the February 25 society, do the same, and send your poem to [february.25.society@gmail.com](mailto:february.25.society@gmail.com).

*I pray for a large appetite, so that I may enjoy myself for as long as possible.*