

1.

DECADES WITHOUT MARY ROSARIE

So ,where have you been since 1947

and why are you not here?

Where were you when I was born?

Perhaps hiding quietly in the earth wrapped in white linen.

Are you now aloft in some cloudy Paradise

looking down on the painful urgent silliness of our looking?

Are you above all our earthly longings; our need to belong to something?

I want to know you, yet all the while I want you to be beyond the vale,

beyond the hurt and questions and ignorance in which we here live.

All those times birds flew into my house

was that you stopping by saying,

”Silly child, live your life and stop worrying about we who are free.”

Are you living and doing not sending a second thought out?

Are you a doctor lawyer Indian chief buzzing around your busy life.

Do you not even know that I exist?

Drop me a line sometime when you're not too busy.

2.

SHOES

I was born in a shoeless place.

Then was sent on to a country where they told me I must wear shoes.

Now I am here - an old woman -

still being told I must wear shoes.

My little toe hurts but I cannot walk barefoot in the research room.

My presence is qualified by the imperative to wear shoes.

Throughout these many years I have worn

flat shoes

toeless shoes

high-heeled shoes

Joan Crawford shit-kicker shoes

Olaf Daughter clogs

sandals

loafers

Birkenstocks

rubber-soled shoes

mules

shoes with cleats

making my feet sore

walking the floor

longing to return to that shoeless place.

3.

IF MY SISTER YOU BE...

This here I write for you

One who I could never call little.

Because you were older than me

Though be born of the same Mam.

Maybe.

Are you just a name on a paper

Are you just a name I wished up

And molded into human form

To place on an altar in my head

Maybe.

In a dream I did not recognize

In a dream sent to me by another

In a dream shared by aged children

In a place where the night fears rise.

Maybe.

Dreams should be of yellow daffodils

Dreams should be Easter colored

Dreams should be summer lit grass

Dreams should be happy babes at hand.

Maybe.

The fears of childhood are too harsh in us.

They robbed us of our joy.

But who really knows joy

On this frighteningly lovely Earth?

4.

TIME

Into the time that I knew what the time was
and where the time was
and through that time in to where it was not
so if it was not then
is it there really

Is there really any time
or is time always here around us
sucking us in
tumbling
and then letting us fall out into itself

My time
my time
is there such a thing
is there my time and your time and his time and her time and their time or is there only time
is there even time
Or is it all just odd time
Odd flickers of moonlight that say it is night
odd glows of sunlight that say it is day

Or is time odd time like being under water when we see things unclearly
when things are shadowy and blurry does that just mean we're underwater
is there any time under water
or does time cease to exist in that deep pool

Float me on the water

float me to Heaven

flood me to God's time

from where she will likely simply return me here

to this place of wondering about time

5.

COW

There is a cow somewhere near my house that I occasionally hear lowing deeply sadly

but I do not know exactly where she is for I would visit her she since sounds so alone.

I'm alone and if I was with her perhaps I might have found a companion

who could stand with me the times I go out in my yard and we would low together.

Oh world do you hear us

do you hear us crying

do you hear us wailing

do you hear us singing

everyday moo moo.

Each in our own place each saying to ourselves I'm alone here I wish I had a companion

wish I had another living being who shared my feelings and thoughts and needs.

The singing cow has no bell for if she did I would hear it and follow the call to be

by her side companions sharing not so isolated moments under the open sky.

A bell jingles and climbs and announces saying

I'm here to your East

I'm there to your West

I'm far

I'm near.

But a cow lowing is a deep mournful sound and hard to locate echoing on the wind

like the hoot of an owl or a banshee's cry seeming to come from everywhere all at once..

If I knew where the cow was I would go to her and I would talk to her and I would stroke her

seeing if she is overfull with milk or simply too heavy on the hoof.

Perhaps it is just as well that I only hear her.

Perhaps it is better that I can only imagine her

and imagine her as a milk cow

rather than a cow about to be slaughtered for her meat.