

Simple Entrances

I'm always looking for models of simple poem formulas as poetic diving boards. Start from any of these:

Jane Gentry's three sentence poem:

Exercise in the Cemetery

Jane Gentry

At dusk I walk up and down
among the rows of the dead.
What do the thoughts I think
have to do with another living being?
In the eastern sky, blue-green as a bird's egg,
a cloud with a neck like a goose
swims aching toward the zenith.

Write several little poems following the form of the Jane Gentry poem above. Note it has three sentences:

1. The first sentence is setting.
2. The second sentence is a question.
3. The third sentence contains image or metaphor.

Charles Simic's: Could This Be Me?

Could This Be Me?

An alarm clock
With no hands
Ticking loudly
On the town dump

—Charles Simic
in the New Yorker 1/17/22

Though it seems the goal is to feel a part of the Great Everything rather than to see things as mirrors of your self, to follow this model can be a quirky and fun exercise. Its haiku-like brevity is much of its charm. It has only twelve words.

Follow Thich Nhat Hanh's poem Journey into a simple poem:

Journey

Here are words written down—
footprints on the sand,
cloud formations.

Tomorrow
I'll be gone.

(Note the poem pattern goes: fact, metaphor, statement.
The statement is almost earned, but is also a leap.)

The following poem is by Czeslaw Milosz and translated from the Polish by Milosz and Robert Hass:

Autumn

Cathedral of my enchantments, autumn wind
I grow old giving thanks.

Milosz

Write a few poems imitating this pattern:

First line: (place or thing) of my (general noun) (somehow an apposition?)

The place and general noun poetically parallel or define what I have labeled here the "apposition."

Second line makes a short statement, an I statement perhaps.
Write yours as a single two line poem, or as stanzas in longer poems.

Lame jch examples:

Nest of my bird thoughts, notebooks,
I give you these eggs of song.

Hovel of my insecurities, faucet dripping.
I crawl home.

Towers of my inspiration, flying clouds,
I reach beyond myself