I Metaphysick for the New Year

If Love would have her way with us
  she’d bind us lip to brow and brow
to knee, and wind a lariat
  of leaves about Love’s moment that
in it holds all time. But you
  and I are sick of love. The year
has turned. My heart, where nothing sat –
  a wreath Love bound, that by our will
  will prove a collar or a crown.

II A Week Later

If as we’d thought: once monthly thus
for three decades, this twelve-month near
  used up our quote of days, and squared
that dozen though the year, a hoop,
  swerved summer – zero sum, that season’s
integer, when lost we pared
then doubled nought as if to reckon
  absence out of air. As if minus
  made Love’s quotient disappear.

III Mid-January

“Indeed it is the first day again and again of everything”

In deed each day is made anew –
  Time’s gaze in time turns trespass true;
Love’s tempered arrows hit and miss
and hit their mark, and prick out words
the blind by touch can read. For when
a bird touch down upon a pond’s blue
eye, by concentric rings its iris
widens. Time, sit by Love’s side.
The night unfolds tomorrow’s news.

IV  To Herself, Dimly

These verses that you write, what mean
you by them?  Love not chatter needs
as swans bemoaneth not more white
to bleach their plumes but beg instead
a pond where they might preen.  Smirking,
you purport; she makes her own, for
sturdy craft whose bowsprits export
spume. But Love regards not shirking.
On her own heart she feeds.

V  A Game of Chess

A board atilt between two chairs.
How long, Love asks, has this gone on?
In dream patois will mimics whim –
the Queen remits her bracelets, viziers,
wits, and pawns her heart to colonize
the King, who retreating draws in air
a triad now become a square.
On which he sits.  Radiant, Love
pulls that throne from under him.

VI  Riddle

Cat fur on end means a back up;
two crossed sticks may coax a flame;
smoke can blind or make Love fly away
though ardor magicks smoke to fog
and Love to Fool, who remarks not
an unmade bed when Folly says:
   lie down on it.  The pussy willow’s
rune is spring.  Now spell your name —
   wert gone (but stay!) in winter’s pillow.

VII   Jupiter in Retrograde
The end of winter’s transit moon
   brings woe.  So does a horse, bedazzled,
   stay its trot, else run too hot
and called cantankerous.  Make not
a twelve-month filly walk too soon —
   vexed, her legs will buckle under.
   Love bends a knee and bids the muzzle
graze; better fat abed then skint
abroad, lest hurry put asunder.

VIII  Talking About It
Hip, instep, knee, wishbone — bewitched.
   And every molecule sequined
until Love’s skin becomes a suit
   of scales, each note a star that singing
makes no sound but breathing says —
   *nota bene:* there, and there, as musing,
Love makes of touch a pretty lute —
   nerve, my own, and tender pitch.

IX    Months later
As if Love’s heart run out of air
   so as my heart too high would speak
so that my sleeve now a white flag
   that which simple made unstuck — flags
at the chase.  I thought I was other
than I am. My busking hat?  To
my betters, whose petitions wreak
   more havoc than I bring to bear.
X  Anatomy

If you court heartbreak you may marry it. Love balks, protests, grieves, tarries –
  The long way round a slip-knot noose, no hanging, but had a heart ankle,
  wrist, knee (for though it be a living thing it does not walk, live, coo) –
Wrong. These many limbs in traction.
  For the heart do sup, cry, sleep, rankle.

XI  Cathexis

If I could take my heart by stealth and place it in my heel, so that
  my ribs might make a belfry where
  Love’s bell might forge anew a tongue –
  and then by walking so repair
  the newborn changeling to brute health
I’d whistle as I walked the route –
  or that’s the tale I tell myself.

XII  Burn

A dozen makes it come out right
but as a stone thrown in a pool
makes rings that perfect do not touch
so Love, exhausted, makes her rule –
  enough. But truth, restrained, unspools
  and spills. Hot water burn upon my breast
makes manifest my heart’s remit,
  and my foot lame, where it was put.

Coda

Folly, to think rhyme could make stand that at which Love throws up its hands.