

WRITE THIS DOWN

for Rosaly Roffman

I

The cheapest words are loaded:
And, be, but. Who knows where they will lead?
The only chance is to collaborate,
cling to *here, there, what*, the anchors.

II

Expensive words are teachers.
Bridge: "BRR ... RIIIIII ... DI-JUH."
The grind the Ready Span the goal,
South Bronx streets... Fifth Avenue
Camden blocks Society Hill.
Same old stoop ... The Portico of The King.

III

Let objects be companions.
A child's hankie sporting print alligators
like brush salesmen, chops a-grin.
A bit of Velcro, a colleague 'cross
the world on an aged overnight bag.
A subway token to a bench
along the paths of Central Park.
Rich histories grasp your shoulder,
look you fresh in the face,
breathe your very breaths.

IV

I'm hyphenated.
I'd like to keep my promises
but I can't sign on the dotted line.
You'll know it too, when it happens.
Another's penstroke, grand and generous,
like that of a prince or president.

V

You, however, must remain punctuation.
I don't really want to know the all-of-you.
Still, your ellipsis bids to come and see.
*Listen to the words that grieve and giggle
someplace in my phrases following.*