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People are from places.

The squares of tribulation

out of which the features

of their faces look.

Their souls hidden but upheld

as the sun is hidden rising

behind the Kidder house

whose gabled murk a while

is rimmed with glory.

And what the sea hides

is more hiding still

the ruminant pastures down there

where everything is used again

and the sea has no face

except among the Jews

who call sea level

pnei ha yam, face of the sea.

The level on which we ride —

as if we, the land of us, were
features on the sea's face —
I thought this in a dream
thinking of the black square
full-face of her pet cardinal bird
looking up at the prospect of a friend.
And a friend is always seed.

1 October 2012, Cuttyhunk

=====

A long day listening ahead
the sun on the brink of
perching on the roofbeam
of the house across the way,
one more big gull.

Sun worship must have been the easiest dread,
fear of its not coming, or staying too hot and too much.
A delicate matter to have a god
or any other friend. The care. The fear.
The bells you ring to make her welcome.

1 October 2012, Cuttyhunk

WHAT SAMPHIRE ON THIS COAST SPRINGS?

Cattle. Monsters on their first fling
youth habits hard
“convinced of the innocence
of what I was doing, I could not imagine the grief
I was causing to my parents’ hearts,
which had no reason or way
to glimpse my conviction.”
How good children cause pain —
how I did — the desperate
need to follow one’s nature —
yetzer, the impulse — which by sheer fact of
being unconsidered, impulsive, is called evil.
Yetzer, the Evil Inclination.
It is what lives in children,
more in boys than in
girls, I think, since women
have clearer sense
of who they are —
absolutely necessary for them,

an adaptation (if not the root)
to 4,000 years of patriarch.

1 October 2012, Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

Buster of blue sky, quick clouds.

Harpmost headfirst in hem-in-haw,

we are so slow to go to heaven —

at least we spend a lot of time

(ink, paint, marble, music) going heaving.

1.x.12, Cuttyhunk

=====

Clouds are particles of water
just as we are
hence it behooves us
to be beautiful as they
and pass away.

1.x.12, Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

It feels like Yom Kippur today —
apologizing to the world for all the hurt and harm
and neglect. And for all the times
it hurt me, or harmed me
I should apologize for those too,
for being in the way
of what had to be going on.

1 October 2012, Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

Sun sea positive responses

the good poems have strange words in them

chasm or pitkin or achiote

and the strange drags the mind to new places

across the usual street and past

the usual markets, *dérives*,

use the wrong map to get to the right place,

pebble in your shoe,

the wise annoyance.

Sage

1 October 2012, Cuttyhunk

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So many sparrows
so much innocence

beginning again

 is a sparrow
on the railing

here long enough
 to be.

1.x.12, Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

Bad habits seasoned with neglect
a rapturous sunrise every minute in the
hand of the mind, blur of feeling
becomes a kind of bone, raccoon's
penis bone say reliably small
there are men who use them as good luck charms

2.

the way women keep certain boyfriends
scruffy and dusty as a rabbit's foot
but somehow reassuring on Thursday afternoons,
comparisons are prompt among the superstitious,
don't let them get too close, don't count on them
keep them two zip codes away
and never stay for breakfast.

3.

We belong to what we believe.
Old dried walnut still in husk

nubby as an orange, losing color fast
but when I think of it I see it green
fresh green, fresh tumbled from the old tree
itself gone down in last year's hurricane.

4.

So I'm left with Wyoming, Medicine Bow mountains
in July, the snow all melting from the bottom, mosquitos
lively under the snow and they do sting. Did me.
The sky was closer than I ever knew.

2 October 2012, Cuttyhunk

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What really is it right to trust?

Lights far out at sea, angels or submarines,
you wait for dawn and bless the dwindling darkness.

In which you have always hidden, and you hide.

Trust this. A word on the brink of morning.

2 October 2012, Cuttyhunk

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Copernican theory of the traffic light
the moths move round it
and the colors talk.

Interpret amber.

Let her eyes decide. No snow
in Laramee. But on Churches Beach
the gale whips our cheeks with sand, eyes,
sand grains in the teeth, confused syntax
of the wind remembering all the people
it has touched and left behind.

Surf high.

Not sure where to set my foot, the rocks
slither in the advancing tide.

None of this is now.

A mess of yesterdays. A broken-down barn.

Or just the bulb (a helix now round
no more) in the wall lamp be a sun
and all the objects in the room be planets round it

unaccountably motionless as I watch. Puzzling,
when I created this world it had movement in it
as sonatas or political people have —
gaps silences. I think I am the silence
setting the poor room finally free.

2 October 2012, Cuttyhunk

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Writing in the dark lets the light
surprise the broken language of the scholars
the unflowing ink, the heart's path
indecipherably expressed.

What is the heart doing with a pen in its hands?

Hasn't it given the world enough already
just by living one day from dawn till night?

The ink has no color now. As if the waters of Lethe had crept in
and everything it thought it then forgot.

2 October 2012, Cuttyhunk

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It's where the paper wants to drink you in —
it's where your sins wake you up early
as if there were still something left to do.

2.x.12, Cuttyhunk

=====

Day of atonement?

Day of being two

people at once or more,
day of the lixivating dead,
day when the ashes of twig and bone
start to mean something again —
a phoenix?

A phoenix is soap,

an oil, your wife is fragrant with it
when she comes up from the river or from sleep.

A phoenix is anything that flies up
out of a child's chemistry set,
a smell, a sound, a lingering.

The phoenix is all around you. A phoenix is air.

For water is the ash of air, and from it we live.

2 October 2012, Cuttyhunk

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Having recourse to order

faute de mieux

when spiration stops being in

and the day gets mad, the sod-off shitgun pointed at

even the decentest of your arriviers —

hammerers down the road,

astonishing tumult of the actual! —

I pray to the clouds for clouds

to shield me from I shun.

2 October 2012, Cuttyhunk

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Always tell your children lies
before the truth
gets to spoil their lives.

2.x.12, Cuttyhunk