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Replicas ready
in the church of originals
the money flows
like sand between the toes
always comes back
always some grains of it
left when you get home.

Saturday morning in October here — the shotguns at first light — or even before
— ducks being killed on the river. People call themselves hunters who hide and sit
and drink and kill.

13 October 2012, Lindenwood

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Something about churches,
fortnights, things
you can hold in the hand.
And another thing: candles
for christenings, scissors
for crafts class, a pale
woman on the Orinoco
rather small. Hold her too
in giant hand.

Fall for me this herb
in so few borders
grows, all inconspicuous
and hardy but who knows.
Soon the churches open
and doves are bought and sold.
Here is what I found on the river
boss, it flew into my hand.
Nibble just one leaf
of it and women swoon
the older the more so —
girls usually have
more mediated dreams.
So a fortnight means
two little weeks but

when does the art begin?
Duck hunters on my river
why, sparrows
are not answers,
they're not even questions —
do you fall
for me? Lady radio
all day long.
It numbs the gums
but nimbles the mind,
you're young again
your family is alive.
So we call this herb
the greenest church
and the word it spells
in you — arcane,
obsolescent, dialect,
odd — will make
the object into a subject
incarnate in your arms —
isn't that what rivers are for?

13 October 2012

HERBAL VARIATIONS

O splendid word
they laid it in Mozart's
baby lips, they crushed
the leaves for pesto
and fed it to Caesar
to make him yearn
to lord it in the Delta
mumble mumble but clear mind
till the name of his mind
was Cleopatra and she
was queen enough for me,
I who give you these secrets
so I have none left of my own.

13 October 2012

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What is this thing about a heart
we think it can belong to someone
we say That is my heart
or I give you my heart.
But we belong to it, it is
not our tongue. Suicide
is an attempt to escape from the heart
that never-sleeping master.
Mistress. No one knows
the gender of the heart.
Accept its most holy rule,
go through the paces it proposes,
be measured by its syllables,
obey its interrupted
narratives. The heart knows
when you should go home.
Of course the heart is a bird
and your body its exclusive sky,
everybody knows that.
But what does the heart know?
What does it see as it flies
owl-eyed through the dark
of personal history and burning gates?
Das Herz weiss alles

but speaks a language we
too often do not know.

13 October 2012

for Lynn Behrendt's collages 2012

[That is why the heart's so big
to hold all our mistakes
and make sense of them.
Or why the heart is so small
that it fits inside the smallest sky
with room to fly around.]

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Slightly hard of hearing
but right on pitch
the morning slowly
takes in the light.
Cosmology
was always like this,
a guess in the dark
with people on it
and they begin to talk.
Welcome home, the light says.

13 October 2012

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Handiwork of ours.
Habit hands
elucidating neuroses
by actual touch.
Lust is grievous
sound is lust
personified by air
made to move
thrillwise to lonely
ears. Air. Ear
amplifies, simplifies
tone to tune to
what it feels like
to be you at that
time. Tone. Turn
into what you desire.
Become the other,
alors, je suis devenu
un autre sans être moi.
Wearisome distinctions.
Brown leaves slipping
down the cliff face.
Maple later. These
things run by color,

you know, and how
many people look.
Looking wears things out.
I will sleep now.
As if I too could get
out of this dream.

13 October 2012

EINE ALPINSINFONIE

1.

The mountain is itself the phantom
that lives there
in one measure of the orchestra
the land is found
and we live in mystery.
The mystery of what is always there.
Above and around us. Below us.
For we are mountains too.

2.

As fair far we
hum we run
our splendor once was God
is mountain now, fear
and hard rock and spring water
coming, always coming.
The way the night does.

3.

He slept inside the sound
the cave was deep
silver niter on the walls
dripped down. Dark

deals me. He woke
in darkness. Fall.
And the *eigenlicht*, 'own light'
the eye does to itself,
the spell of unknown colors.
And those too were in the living
water dripping down.

4.

There are men for whom
there are no mysteries.
Keep far from them.

Let the mountain
walk with you into the mountains —
reason has no reason here.

13 October 2012, Fisher Center

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Edgar good son Edmund evil
as if the spear gives life
how can a word
know so much about
the mouth that speaks it?
A word is lagniappe,
a little piece extra given
you can take home from experience
when the sky is full of rain
but not much comes down.
I have no pleasure but what I give to thee—
smashed the guitar on the stump of an oak
the twanging crack filled the lower air
and sky folk answered, the sleek ones,
some feathered, some invisible, but all
clamorous with music — orchestral climaxes
from a sunken continent — I have heard
the chamber music of Atlantis, I have tried
to write it down but don't know how,
help me, I keep saying what I mean,
there must be a way to hear what it means,
an Erin always was an island
when England was just a shoulderblade of France.
Lapsus linguae, a simple

knowing more than I will ever know.
And if the phone pole also put out leaves
and the hydrant flowered, and all the stuff I've made
suddenly starts talking by itself, themselves,
I was just an accident of their dance, words,
the wings of them fluttered close to my face,
I gasped and they used my breath to speak.
There was nothing inside me but the breath to ask.
And sometimes even I forgot to question.
Then silence happened. The Orinoco
poured its gaudy silts into the sea.
Do you hear that ringing in your ears? That's me.

14 October 2012

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The location of the disaster
remains uncertain.

It might have been at sea
just off the coast of never
or it could have happened in a city
perhaps the very one you're sitting in now
or lying stretched out on your bed
reading this dispatch under window light
on a grey day with traffic continuous.

But is that what that roaring sound really is?
Could it also be the disaster? You're comfy
where you are, and afraid to learn some sad
disconcerting new truth. You stay where you are.

Read on. You leave it to me
to find the disaster and think about it,
react to it, make a song and dance about it,
a whole megillah of misery and reproach.
Because we know who caused the disaster. We always know.

14 October 2012

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Apollyon? Time
kneecapping me
and tree, autumn
synchronicities

cast about or liquid sun
pouring down the sky.

14.x.12

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Poetry is shamanic
an evocation of something from nothing,

or shapes from sounds.

All through its history poetry has been plundered by other skills and habits of mind. Prose took its narration of fact and fancy. Religion stole the gods it invented and used them to enslave whole populations. Technology stole its numbers even, so we have no numbers anymore. Syntax even as I write is being plundered by linguists and neuropsychologists.

What is left to us? What's left is silence alone, and words to break the silence with, to work our spells on the world.

14 October 2012

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Polyander, we can't
get away from Troy.
Homer was a woman after all
— called blind
because women are not supposed
to see what we're up to —
and told all she could, too oft distracted
by the men in her life.
Too many men, that's
the story of Troy. Of any
war. And women
forgive us for what we do.

All religion means
to catch mother's smile —
did anyone ever have
a happy childhood?
Too few women, and one too many.

2.

Egypt was not desert
when she got there,
sand came later,
foreign substance, as she

also was, the charmer,
the harmer. Not just Troy
did she burn down
but all of Egypt too.
Not she. War
is what wastes land.
She fled from war, war followed her.
Nobody's fault. Men's
fault. And hers
for giving. Forgiving.

3.

It is my morning and the milk goes by,
truck between markets.
“The female principle of the world”
he cried out when he was old,
they all cried, “virgin mother,”
“mother of God” we all tried.
But war was easier,
we fight so hard so long,
fought for something no man
can have. There were
too many of us, and only one of you.

15 October 2012

A COMMENTATOR ON THE ILIAD

I'll wind up in a dictionary
of those who described you, a million footnotes
to a single fuck.

15.x.12

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(Sad ambiguity of the Homeric poems. Homer ('she who speaks') was a Canaanite priestess who tried to show the horror, vanity, absurdity of war. But with her fateful poetic gift, she wound up often glorifying what she despised, by sheer intensity of poetic practice, making every situation real, every personage speaking from the heart (as Shakespeare, that man, makes us, my wife tells me, sympathize with every character when that character speaks). Alas that anyone ever fell in love with Achilles.)

15 October 2012