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Not things but many left.
Men are left. Some keep score
some are walkers
past the green gate. And you.

You got up early to see
gates swing open but they seldom do,
you sneak in wrapped in thought

and there you are inside alone.
The walker walks away,
the keeper keeps his eyes on something else.

You are free to move
beautiful in the green
as long as likes you.

See the hedgecat sleeping in the sun,
she's been sick but soon be better,
see artemisia growing where roses welk

see the silver fountain
slim wet footprints on the marble rim
but no one seen.

You touch the footprint with your fingertip—
now you belong to whoever you touched,
you drink a palmful from the pool
settle down with your back against a beech,

sleep, smooth, sleep as well as any cat.

*He who can sleep inside a dream
can one way wake up from waking.*

A voice said that while you slept,
you think you should have licked the footprint
to taste who had been there

but by now all that is dry
you think and sleep deeper.
But that sort of water is wet forever.

19 September 2011

HELLGATE

I used to like that bridge a lot.
It didn't go anywhere I went
or wanted to so it was pure bridge,
useless to me hence beautiful
as I would later learn Ruskin specified.
Pure architecture drawn in the sky.
It was blue in my memory, a tough
slangy mind-your-business blue
like a vial of poison in an opera
the soprano pretends to die from.
From color alone. What does an audience
know anyhow, who ever saw
a blue animal? Unnatural. A bridge
is unnatural sex, perversion we made up
bored one island afternoon. What if
we could walk over the water! Bla bla.
A blonde from Quito walks by Flushing Bay,
deer are said to browse in Alley Pond.

19 September 2011

for Ava, who made me remember

= = = = =

I have the feeling that my right hand lightly
adherent to your left hip would set up
an electrochemical current—synapse by synapse
like a Pony Express rider using up horse after horse—
which would by transverse suction write a thought
from my hypothalamus (the space below the bridal bed)
—but does it know how to do thinking?—
directly to your cortex, the Pascalian lemma
where you can't tell right from wrong. The whole
process would approximate a slow exploratory
kiss. Other metaphors clamor for admission
to this experiment but for now quite enough
to have a someone and a someone else
walk almost together by an afternoon river
washes an island where I will never live again.

19 September 2011

HYMNAL HAS US

Wandering all the while
a bleat of prisoners
pilgrims through this vale
of life abundant and no end
until the end.

One knows
what one is told
to sing and then one does.
The breath believes it
no matter if the mind

knows better. Or worse.

We belong
to what we say.

For that reason it is wise
to seek out Byzantium
or any domed old place
and hear what used to pray.

So I have sung
the other song
now say this.
Say sing sing say

difference only seems,
What color horse
does a blind man ride?

The leaves
move the breeze.

20 September 2011

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Translate silver into gold
and spend the difference
downtown, where the gulls
lean against the wind
and tell you go, girl, go,
find your actual island
find the rock
where the breath
can find you.
Land there and listen.

20 September 2011

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An affidavit filled out on the moon
is not valid earthly Tuesdays—
dream your own dreams, foreigner,
we shovel through flowers enough
just to get to the door, to open up,
see what's out there, glory be,
sea all the way to the horizon.

The moon is wrong anyhow.
You bring me this paper you taught to speak.
It smiles and clears its throat, its letters
crawl around like lizards in the sun.
Meaning makes us all uneasy.

Moon. Lizard. Piece of paper. Flowers
unspecified (blue hydrangea). Construct
something that talks about these things
and this will have been it. You need me close.

20 September 2011

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Longitude of a faraway car
blue-shaded black feathers of magpie
(g'day, sir!) crazy redhead Colorado
o the climes we wept through
on our way from cattle to castle,
always the wrong religion, wrong flag,
wrong color eyes but the skin
always seemed to be the same rich
discourse in which we try to fall
over and over deep in the shallowest.

For surface is all.
And there is nothing inside the earth at all
but noise and all the tribes of heat
along with those subtle spirits who learned
with love's ardor to breathe inside the rock.

2.

Leaving us infidels aloft.
All for love, it's said
but I held back.

3.

I waited in my childhood for the muffin-man
because I heard his song my mother sang
over and over till his lane became my street
and everywhere I went I smelled his wares
cinnamon and raisin and Christian yeast.
But never did I see him coming to my house.

But when I looked for him in London once
I saw my dead father leap up on a bus
and knew all memories finally turn actual
and I could leave them as he left me
without a wave goodbye up Southampton Row.

4.

Because it all comes back and nothing does.
Almost autumn. The trees begin to wheeze
a dryer green on their way to gone.
I was thinking of how heroic a boy must be
to carry so much of his dream world
out into everybody else's everyday,
or how hard it is to trust a color
when color is the only thing you see.

For I was blind a while to outline and to fact,
lived in streets like Monet's gardens,

no water lilies there for me, though,
I went by color and by color loved,
the dark blue shimmer stretched across her hips.

21 September 2011

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Is it an animal
or a religion
a trumpet or a drinking glass?

Does it tinkle
somewhere deep inside the house
when you pluck this

string, here, like this?

21 September 2011

[**THE PICTURE** speaking]

1.

My head is a shovel to shift clouds
my sex organs are locks and keys
erasers calipers a night in June.
I am fraudulent because visible.
Authentic because you can't remember me.

2.

The thing you see is trivial.
The thing you remember is the real thing.
I, the noonday devil, tell you this—
believing me or anyone is perilous.

3.

According to the spiny what are they
petals bracts whatever of the artichoke
you have to peel away to come
to the unctuous less dangerous meat beneath.
It all happens by numbers. Help me count
my seeds, I am a ripe fig. No better way
to spend your hours or your hands.

4.

Get something started then let it go.

The boy died before you could make love.

Now every human male contains a part of him.

Love all of us. Hate us for not being him.

5.

But the chemicals are waiting in the little
basement room. Dusty window lets sun in.

An hour late movement in the beaker.

A tiny silver woman swims towards you.

6.

And that was the end of childhood.

Sulfur lost its yellow. Surfers drowned.

Her voice was small but not shrill,
a soft susurrus like the thought of wind
in pine trees when there is no wind.

She bivouacked on your collarbone
patiently until you had finished building
the castle for her between the second
and third ribs on the left side of your chest
where your heart looked out towards Cornwall.

7.

Our last unsatisfactory conversation—
the speaking tube, the submarine.

I studied the way you sprawled on the sand
examining the stray jellyfish beached by the tide.

How your thighs glistened. It was the tears in my eyes.

22 September 2011

ÆQUINOX

Made it to another autumn
and the star still leads!
The pine tree
still holds up the sky.
It is so far north in me
I can breathe pure light.

23 September 2011

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Maybe it was autumn always
and only light and heat kept changing
autumn snow and autumn swelter.
But it was always after.
Birth is the *end* of the process,
the long slow evaporation
into the world and its people
of what was learned in the womb,
the nine-month crash course
we spend our whole lives applying
until we run out of education, and die.

23 September 2011

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Or are there other, prompter, silences.

Rimbaud in the Harrar.

Sibelius in his countryhouse.

Or you last night, asleep before I was.

23 September 2011