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THE ANIMAL

(2-Ix)

Day of your animal
day of your dark

you knew th wharves
before you knew the waves

the ocean was your animal

the separations began then
when all the cars were black
they all moved inland
and everyone was strange

the smell of country

seemed a world made
from old paper and barbed wire and trees

fences

suppose the whole thing was about waiting.

2.

Who needs to be a child.

Her big eyes and long hair
reminded him of something

deer in a clearing then what
overcoming fear by consciousness
winter smell of cardamom

3.

Coming home from the margin
meaning.

There were dogs an accident
side of the road a car on fire
only the frame intact
inside just flame
and people watching.

Nothing is easy.

All the while something else
he was sure he should be doing
not just being here.

Or maybe just being here.

**But that was hard, is hard,
all the legions of the Persians
drawn up around the holy
places in his head.**

**The temple stormed.
And the Romans were no better/**

**No children ever let in
and the priests groaned like the animals they slew.**

**The sacrifice.
Livestock. Sad word
for the about to die.**

**4.
And being home's another book.
Some people knew how to stop
reading halfway through
Not he. To every book
its end. He stumbles
into vacancy.**

**But that too was home.
Big cardboard carton**

with a target crayoned on it.
An arrow flying over the field.

Anything can be the goal.
Any word the bow.

24 May 2013

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**Waiting for the near to veer
tide-turn from the green
towards the dark permissions.**

**Sluggard rises, ascends
each local Everest of hours
till he can close his eyes
again on sacred emptiness
inside to cherish there
and stare the whole day
everlastingly mid-flight
and create his own singular night.**

24 May 2013

A WAKING QUIET AS SLEEP

And what will say?

Spiraea exuberant white

by the side door

this year and this year

the great locust trees along

the river road have blossomed

more than I have ever seen

in fifty years. Whose fault

was my long ignorance.

25 May 2013

=====

**Waiting is a kind of kneeling
before an altar**

quiet altar made of time

**alone (see Exodus,
an hour is the *unhewn stone*)**

**gazing at the clouds
or cloudless sky and listening,**

**never asking always listening.
This is my religion.**

25 May 2013

=====

**Plastic flowers
remind me of pianos,
the noble effort
of those strange machines
to sound like us,
to sing in our voices
the things we mean.
My eyes undeceived
are well pleased
this cold morning by
these sky-blue hydrangeas
that will never fade.
Or not till all our colors do.**

25 May 2013

(Listening to a transcription for two pianos of Liszt's *Mazeppa*)

FEUX D'ARTIFICE

After the white explosion

a single light turns

into a flock of silver birds

who settle slowly beyond the trees

down onto the river

to teach the water the name of fire.

26 May 2013

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**Four months of talking
hardly listening
come to an end.
And conversely.
The school closes
the throat is dry
the leaves ate green.
Hard to make this
clear in Russian
but that's where we are
at last, a land with no
definite article
just clouds in the sky.**

26 May 2013

=====

Beginning at the end again

I understand you best

by looking out at the rain

out there where the changes live

the lilac people who rule the world

flowers and dancers.

(26 May 2013)

=====

**What does the bee
know? She
rules the lines of light
that string the world together**

**You get home faster
when you're everywhere**

**An old book says that all
things on earth were born on earth
except these three: asbestos,
wheat. the honeybee.**

**But I think I too
am from a distant place
so strange everything seems
strange magical things**

**irises, clouds in a blue sky,
humming bees.**

26 May 2013

OLD FIRE

Flame on the candle

votive lamp

going for hours

tongue of flame

speaking the body's

language out there

in praise of mind

red glass

sacred heart Buddha voice

the candle has been burning since morning

the flame is young the fire old

it has been burning

since the beginning of the world

old fire old fire

marrow bone

horse's mane

remembering the shape of the wind.

26 May 2013

SUNG IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

1.

**Hold the note till we hear him—
because she jogged past the setting sun
declaring a silhouette
that lingered in the forest,
became a tree**

and Apollo wept.

No myth ever really leaves the mouth.

2.

**You gave me this instrument
I found the stone myself**

**The face I carve therein
can only be his own.**

3.

**Open the window.
We're hearing excerpts
from the long opera of the world,
all the tedious dialogue left out,
only the bird songs left in,
only trees answering the wind.**

26 May 2013

THE ROAD

I want to watch you
walking up the road.
It is moonlight
it is country,
I trail behind you
a hundred feet or so,
you're walking slowly
it is country, it is moonlight,
I know it's you,
you're carrying something
a flask or bundle
under your left arm
propped on your hip.
I think it is milk
(country milk, moon milk)
I keep my distance
you're safe, I can feel
the air that passes round you
come to meet me,
I feel the safety of you
walking slowly, snug
on the empty road,
meadows around you,
no forests, moonlight,

**is it milk you carry
or is it something else,
something I don't know
how to remember?**

26 May 2013

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**The hand of the woodpecker
woman climbing easy out of earth
you can tell a jogger by the way he drives his car
when the blossoms have fallen from the apple tree
there is a long silence called summer
there are five of us waiting to take hold
so many me to see
she saw me at my weakest when I had a past
a strong person has no history
the vaporetto took us to the Arsenale
if rich people had the sense to buy no art
art would be healed in a generation
it should be illegal to sell a work of art you haven't made
yourself, it is signing someone else's name
black magic rises from five fingers or one bird.**

27 May 2013