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The five-foot ladder
leading to my head.
Where the brain sleeps
in its wet womb
and dreams my life.
And dreams you too.

22 March 2011

TO A THERAPIST

You have a whole vocabulary
ready to overstand me.

22.III.11

JERRY'S RATTLE

wakes the dead.

It quacks.

I translate rocks

he said, I say pebbles,

I know ground

I know leather things

because they say.

When the eagle comes by itself

let it settle or fly off

who know what it carries in its beak

my business is to watch

watch with my rattle

watch with my mouth

with the rattle of my rattle I see everything

and when it flaps away

leaves one feather after it

I try to pick it up

but it's only the eagle's shadow

I try to pick its shadow up
and it turns into my shadow

and this makes me fly.

My teachers said
Fly on your shadow only
leave the machines alone
fly on your shadow
it will never fall.

Who were the dead I was waking
and why were they dead
and what were they doing
packing their valises
and tying their colorful bundles
on the day 13-Death
the only day in the year they could go

where do they go
I don't have to know
I have to wake them
I have to let them go,
they're waiting for me
to rattle my rattle,

go, I murmur in my ordinary

language, go home
lovely spooks,
find your way home,
ride the ringing of my rattle all the way

a sound carries

the dead ride our music
the dead ride sounds
the way I ride shadows

nothing else counts
but making sounds
and finding the way home.

home is always somewhere else

that's why all the music we need
that's why I rattle my rattle

when I was little boy
the radio used to say every week
only the shadow knows

only a shadow is always at home

the sun thinking its way through the clouds

makes it happen

the firelight makes it happen

we invented fire

so we could have shadows at night

the sun is a rattle that sings shadows

I belong to everything when I make noise.

22 March 2011

= = = = =

Of course the stars move
but the moon moves quicker

in a thousand years I have never
watched the moon one whole night through

from rising to moonset—
what kind of friend am I?

22 March 2011

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Strong wind.

Æolian harp of the trees,

it just so happens—

what and where they are,

all the bare branches,

shapes and hollows,

linden and maples—

that they sound like people

talking, big people

not too far away. I am

the foreigner, their words

pass me right by.

22 March 2011

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As much as I am able to tree
it said a book about what I tried.
Try tree. Imposing the impossible.
The posthorn of Thurn und Taxis—
I am the final message from the world,
the forced marriage, I brim
over the rim of whom.

Ballgame in Yucatan. Through
the stone ring the head of a man
is kicked or thrown, a fleshy head
cushions bone, keeps skull from cracking.
Through the ring, scores its point
and rolls free. Intimate order

now on top of everything else
as is an apple, fallen,
were still rolling
away from the base of the World Tree.

This game is god.

22 March 2011, Red Hook

= = = = =

Numbers are difficult
they remember me from long ago
they look into my heart
(a place I don't know well)
and count what they see

They never stop.

 The first
is the most terrible of all,
one, one, one it keeps pointing
it keeps saying, it is part
of every other, each thing
is eached into silence, one
by one they're put away
into the museum showcase
where ancient things are
hidden into untouchable sight.

Series are terrifying.

By number three of anything
I'm in a cold sweat
and ten's a swoon.
Not even now do I know
what things are.

 just how many

and where they are
in the terrifying sequences.
If I am anything
I am a zero who wanders
blindfold through them
trying to make sense.

23 March 2011

ANGEL PORT:

a hole cut in the top of a door
closed with a swinging door.

We architects assume
angels can change their size at will
but must be welcomed in,
the port kept always unlocked,
free to swing in, swing out.

We architects assume
their wings are just metaphors for flight
and are not spatially present
so the angel port can be fairly small.
Clearly mark it from outside
with a religious emblem of the householder's choice—
we architects assume angels can read.

And so it is with all our work,
a door for everyone and everyone in his doorway,
smiling, coming in, bringing the good news.

We architects assume all news is good—
how else would we dare to pile up
thousands of pounds of wood and stone on earth?

We architects assume
the earth is ready for us,

at times we like to think
we are part of its own project,
its hands and calculators,
doing some strange work
the earth designed and built us to do.

23 March 2011

= = = = =

“...the president of Yemen put down a resurrection in the south”

—newscaster on Euronews

The voice leaves me now
standing at the tomb
in mind's eye wondering
who was trying to climb up from the dead
and can I help her come back to the light
and make her tell where she has been.
They took her down from the Southern Cross
and laid her in the tomb.
I tremble at the thought of the face I am waiting to see.

23 March 2011

DANIELLE

A stripper
in the window
dancing,
a part-timer
she'd have to be,
how could you strip
ten hours a day
and still have
a body left,

she's dancing
as if she's alone
with herself
hands caress
her neck the way
they do, her eyes
closed as they are
in love or maybe
not to see the two
louts looking up at her
pondering the moves
her hips are making,
what she's promising
if they go in,

she's fully clothed now,
young, looks intelligent,
looks as if she sort of likes
what she's doing,
why not, people do,
it's all about looking,
hurricane Katrina
is years ahead,
it's two a.m., she
is above the world
in a window
and that's ok—
you look at the photo,
tell me if I'm right.

23 March 2011

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returning to be
at the new word rim
flanged to the waking eye
angular noon
where have I been?

24 March 2011

=====

This isn't even anything
a lily petal
plucked off a seat cushion.
Remembering.

24 March 2011

= = = = =

There was a time when this was now.

And then the thunder came

but no one listened.

Far away the earth was cracking open—

what could I do to answer?

I didn't even hear the question,

just loud voices talking in a distant room.

24 March 2011

STRIATIONS

The Lion

was our first surgeon.

Immobilized the patient,

sliced the torso open

and went right for the liver.

The liver is the life,

Olson called it the liv-er,

the one who does our living for us.

Or the live-her, the woman inside us,

the womb of blood,

and from the liver of an elk

Trickster made himself a vulva

and a womb, got himself made love to

by this beast and that beast

and so the forest was populated

the millions who used to be here.

The lion eats liver all up.

The lion chews the throat

where the speech-blood pour out.

He licks the speech-blood,

his reward, one day
this will make him able to speak/
Now he can just roar.

At the yawn of his roar
the birds come down from their high road
and analyze the meat,
work over the tendons and muscles
until it all turns back
to what we all are to begin with,
food. Manna. Dinner.

The dogs get what's left.

2.

So the sense is that we learn something by opening it up.
Open the picture.
We say: bring out the meaning of something.
You tear it open with scalpel, scissor, natural claws
and when it's spread out, spread-eagled
the ribs and splanchna of it,
then the inside comes out, you read what's there,
the lion's claws have let the meaning out.

(24.III.11)