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“It never entered my mind”
the cost of knowing someone
multiplies the mistake.
Evangelical satyrs stumble, fall—
mind settles out and leaves
the water in the water goblet
clear to the eye.

What else is hidden there?
What does a dream really do to the day?
Can you love enough
to sift the gold dust clear
where it tumbles down Pactolus
—gold is always in love with where it was
wants to go back and shine below the ground
sparkle in the mother’s eye,
vaults treasuries buried beneath the elm
light fingered tree that steals from every wind
some moisture to remind. Raintree.

Love gets the best of us. But we apathize
each other, drowse in the long bed.
I am not responsible for your dreams,
am I? Do we walk unwittingly

through those strange corridors of others' sleep?
If you appear in my dream
you owe me an entrance fee
or do I owe you gold
for guest appearance
nighttime reciprocals
are hard to figure out—
hide what you mean
and go to church among believers
while no thought of what's up there
ever enters your mind—
behavior has a mind of its own—
dream is deepest forest
and never more than a glimpse of the sky.

Thunder weather tells me so—
raft on no river.
All day I carried the sea to the boat,
all night I light the stars up one by one
there is no dream that has not afflicted me—
who is this who has entered my mind
to patch moving images on my sad thought?
How dare they picture inwardly
what is never out?

I will speak
to the Dreamer, I will summon him or her
before the assizes of the heart

to accuse her of fantasy,
beauty, 3D, phthaloviolet, rayon, moon,
billion conjunctures of disheveled mind
he leaves me to make sense of, I wake
to hear her snickering.

Oh for the gate
to the mind that marble threshold
that bronze voluted entryway!
The guardian of that portal is my breath.

9 August 2012

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A patch of sunlight
twinkles at the corner of my eye
what kind of bird is that

a legion of light
the kind a hummingbird intersects
fluttering to its feeder
red-vulva'd plastic cup
twirling in the middle of the air—
light feeds us we feed the birds.

9 August 2012

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Walkable document rehearsing skylight shadows
let your outline fall across this page — a word
is no kind of answer, are you? — sunrise also
makes things buzz among the green companions—
or path the myriad with me, maiden fern, coeval apple—
“a round of fiddles” and no Bach, busy scraping
on the saddlebow a bleak outsider to Lakotas
came and claimed to be a dream, a simple time
of night with pictures in it, from which religion
and agribusiness step down as from a cloud
and there you are with nothing in your pockets
and no pants to sew them on. Images kill.

9 August 2012

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It takes me eleven lines to say
what Dante says in one
if even then the sense gets made
that makes the senses thrill
with laudable for once appetites

to know and by knowing come
to that gateway and go in
where someone waits for you
and (surprise!) you're there for them,
you are the moral paladin awaited

to heal them, guide them and be done.

9 August 2012

ARS NOETICA

Don't want it. Poems as pick-up lines
in an outdoor bar size of the world—no
conversaysh without flirtaysh—all psalms
such harsh seductions—but whomever

are we hitting on who sing such stuff?
Angels don't do sex (or is that just papal
propaganda) and even if they did they'd read
not our blogged effusions but our hearts.

As you would if you could look inside me.

10 August 2012

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When you live out of town
they leave you alone
except when it's summer
when they swelter and remember.

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Let someone say it, not me,
this compliant about more than weather—
picking out pieces of the past—moving books,
twenty years of paper, shifting offices,
choosing from a lustrum of my poems
to set before the notional audience,
thunder weather, swelter motion,
compiling a book of essays made
up of what I thought I thought
and thought I could say and said—
all this pastness round my sweaty neck.
I want the virgin day, I want tomorrow
naked, a fresh breeze sweep down
from the hills of autumn and no remember.

10 August 2012

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It gets darker as it gets lighter—
that kind of day and no rain yet.
Jungle calm at six a.m. Now
the autos start prowling through the trees.
Spatter of rain, then not. The way
people drive! I hear their squeals from here.
A shrink in the sky could tell lots
from the way we drive. And it is useful
to remember ‘auto’ is the Greek word for ‘self.’

10 August 2012

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A shower a shame
rumble in thunder—
world where nothing's
real except the trees.
From a white sky
what kind of pain?

10 August 2012

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Be fascinated with success.
Kiss the reigning sovereign's wrist
and skip the abdicated. Luck
is contagious. Good or bad.
Be on your own side for a change.
That means be definite.

10 August 2012

PROLOGUE TO *ORESTES*

(The woman or man who is to be the CHORUS, in costume, comes to the edge of the stage and addresses the audience.)

So I would take your curious faces
and press them to my skin—
and then I'd let the play begin.

Because a play on stage is nothing but bodies
bodies making language happen to each other.
That's why you're here, to see
what bodies say.

Young bodies
with ancient names. It's a family—
every family is always ancient, deep embedded
in irretrievable recollection, always young.

There was Aga Memnon to begin with—
away ten years at stupid Troy, let one
daughter be sacrificed to some weird god
to make good weather. Got home at last

found his wife sleeping with another man
and that scoundrel ruling from his throne.
Wife and lover killed the husband—common
story, cut down as he took his bath.

What followed was unusual, was for us.
His son fled or was sent flying for safety.
his other daughter lived in rags and squalor
hating her mother and refusing love.

When would he brother grow up and come home
and kill the unrepentant bitch who
killed her lovely half-remembered father?
That's now. Here he comes. And she is always waiting.

Come feel the lust and anger on my skin,
lick the taste of vengeance and repression—
then sit back and let the play begin.

10 August 2012

SYRIAC ELEGY

The import of rosy flowers
 on a green bush. Very green.
 Mandibular impulse at peace—
 no engulfing needed now

though there are those who swallow
 mirrors and the walls left bare
 the shadows slinking homeward
 from the rowdy fair. Late summer!

Clouds of organdy, air a challenge,
 heavyweight atmosphere knockout punch,
 hide me in your bosom, child,
 I am the annotation and you are the text.

2.

You must have already guessed the flowers
 what kind they are (you know now
 little I know, so few names, Botany 101
 so long ago) so you can tell by the shade of green

the woman I'm not thinking of, the church
 I never visit, the music rattling on
 in the back of my head, the chipmunk
 glimpsed in the breezeway. Or was it a rat?

3.

What was all that about mirrors?

Do you mean those women from Miami
who stand nervous at the ocean's edge
worrying about Cuba or their husbands,
the intractable mercies of human life?
Or do you mean the ones so beautiful
their images march with them everywhere
to satisfy a famished audience's eyes?

Or something in between. Something dark
in the hallway just after dawn, a gleam
and then it's gone. And it's inside you
and you know that's all you'll get of this day
that one little sheen against all your doubt?

Hold on. There are dolphins in the sea—
it's not all sharks out there, the gulls
woke me and the Christians came home.

4.

Peace, sister. The eyes have it.
Pink of the roses quicksilver of the glass
over the dusty window—same old story,
leaden plates engraved with artless forgeries—
look old, be old. The cashier

does not even bother to look up.
The invisible man buys Kleenexes
already his tears are on the way.

5.

Book of Lamentations.
Lost mirrors.
Children waiting to be born,
oh I've heard it all.

Non credo. The moon's
voluptuous sarabande,
month-long striptease,
and when the clothes
are flung away there's
no one there, the sinner
on his knees before no cross.

How much can a lover stand?
A breeze, a difference.
That's all we ever want.
Sit down beside me
and tell me all your lies
and see if I can tell
your skin from my own.

11 August 2012

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Walk down the hall into sunlight
for a moment I'll see you in silhouettes
then they'll dissolve in glare. Color
hides form, form hides spirit,
spirit hides the other side of life,
the slippery edge of time where something
else begins. But for now you all
belong to me by dint of observation—
what I behold I hold. Whoever
walks away moves deeper into me.

11 August 2012

