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Wandering near enough to the answer
you hear birds singing in the shadow woods
thrushes you think, no, thrashers you think
but they are solitaires, aren't they, so
why now this whole flock of song?

There must be difference. There must be skin
under all your clothes. A song
is something that feels, reacts to change,
weather, touch, it exhibits the property
biology calls irritability, means
reacts to stimuli. Means alive.
I am after all a callous lover—
if you can't feel me it must be your fault.

19 December 2010

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It doesn't have to be any special size
it is a book. It holds the mind
captive for a while and leaves a scar behind
you're often proud to wear, it wrinkles
the smooth infancy of thought.
Readers must all be masochists
but poetry on the other hand comes
bookless through the harmless air,
stings a little going in but leaves
calm luminous waters lucid after.
A perplexity how that gentle think
can bear a whole live bird and let it call.

19 December 2010

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The Marquis de Sod
lies buried here
beneath a rough-hewn stone
granite from Vermont
most likely with no
name on it and here
he lies undone
a famous putrefact, rebel,
reveler, criminal, obese.
His vilest sin was to stop.
See what comes of letting go?

19 December 2010

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I'll count myself once
and count you twice
there's yellow silk in your hair
and you come from the sea
the ocean's always present
in our conversation,
no wonder wherever I go
with you I'm always home.

19 December 2010

SLATE. SHALE. ARDOISE.

A white mark on a greyblack stone
later a pink stroke or a blue
to show you the shape of the cosmos
as I read it with my Only Body Now.

Three color-like traits are enough to tell
when people are smart you've got to be simple

ample. Ocean is other,
Mercuric oxide earlier,

the dream

Chuang-tse never dreamt

is left for you—

be a good schoolchild
Write That Dream
down on your slate—

here is the stone

and here's some chalk

and here's a kiss on your sacred wrist.

And when you're done we'll lick it clean
and swallow taste everything you know

and then some. Spirits and photography,
memory and hope,

grow up in a single instant,
you have become.

Power of color. Third power of stone.

20 December 2010

CHRISTMAS MANIFESTO

The earliest Christian prayer:

φως αυγει, the Light increases,

He is our Solstice, He is the light of the world.

Now think of prisms

segregating daylight—

doesn't it seem that the band of blue

stretched across the white paper

is truer than the naked light itself,

the child more than the mother?

Christ was the light of the world

but what color did he become

or leave behind Him to be with us?

He had no father. Only mother

and her son. A color.

Or we are the father

of what we must become.

Christians, be Mary,

give birth to light.

Pagans, be the shattered

light itself and love

all that it colors
and all that it shows.

Colored lights on Christmas trees:
in heathen speech His gospel told.

20 December 2010

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Crows know what we're thinking.

We know what they're calling.

Make both of these sentences true.

20.XII.10

sTong.ra

Empty fence
fence around an empty field
field with no floor

an empty room
inside no house

there are winds
and there are shapes

we live by contours
we love by shadows still
the body is the shadow of a will

But love these shells
the beautiful outlines we flaunt
around our lame meat

The body is hollow and all the dark
that bleeds and surgeons work upon
is afterthought and guesswork and despair
for we are none of that,
imaginary organs in a thicket of nerves
never lose the lissome of your will.

21 December 2010

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Catchphrase intermittent
Salisbury Turnpike salsify
what's a market
rich towns have farmers' markets
poor towns have supermarkets
I am a vegetarian now
I have forgotten blood.

Meat was a book I used to read.

Eat what little whom I can,
they all have names
they all have faces

or a Romeo aloft—
people fall in love
for motives their imagery betrays.

See, now I've spilled some
ink over Christmas
to make the kind of love
saying what never has to be said.

First lamp of architecture:
need-free exuberance of thrust.

Was Ruskin a Christian?

A Christian is not someone who believes in Christ

a Christian is someone Christ redeemed,

lives in a world shaped by the grace of that pain.

21 December 2010

MADRUGADA

Knowing ore is about the need to know
or take or touch or be absolute
a new arranger with bakelite spoon
vintage commercials unsheathed in sleep
destabilize the human ordinary link
because too many oranges in Juarez
all that sweetness piled up on carts
to block out the barren hill no eagles
we tell you lies because we understand
a leaf off an ordinary tree will cover it
things have come to pay their dues
battleship grey or are they Christians
pretty scatter rugs tossed around the sky
like blue October destitute of logic
but with shapely legs dawn of a touch
we knew us like gardens with no speaking
try to listen and be hard a Goethe moment
arrives in local sciences when they dare
look up from their grant applications
to see the world in which the world
keeps happening dawn of thinking
no lucid signs just guesses in the woods
things join us at the hip and laugh at love
prophecy is a fox in the shadows a mesa
breaks the blue sky the stones at midnight

scoot along the sand truckstop monologue
broke the night in Needles broke the border
no one needs you in the sky be here
on the contrary an eagle over a frontier
what does anybody understand of where they are
what more can a hammer do but fall
strike the water pound silver nails into the stream
the sky's a very special kind of skin.

22 December 2010

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You meet someone and it all changes
now you are left alone to think
the shape of a lip tells more than the word it says.

22.XII.10

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After play the sky
tastes like you
I touch your fence
I'm bad at boundaries
at every moment
the Djinn stand before you
at every moment
you have three wishes.
Only first I need to know
why they call this absence blue.

22 December 2010

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Persimmon parchment with blue letters on it
probably oxidized silver stately alphabet
but can you read it? it is a gospel
for an unknown god, all the commandments
are precisely the same as our own desires
you join this religion by being born
baptism is your first breath.

22 December 2010

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Spend the day learning
about snails of the British Isles.

Do not eat them.

Read a novel featuring snails.

Breathe the internet.

22.XII.10

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There used to be a time
when I had time for time

but no space for space
now I have a little space

and no time at all.
Like all Germans

Einstein was a betting man
and gambled my life away.

22 December 2010