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New-found whole numbers
between one and two—
orthogonal paradise
arrow this way

between you and me
a population
citizens of our own mess
our stress our love

and then a perfect wilderness
where the tribes of us
can wander free
and never lose

the simplicity of touch.
Number like a gull scream
number like rain
number like now. And then.

25 December 2010

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But is there another one
a walkway between two darks
or a flume or sluiceway where Abaddon
waters his fierce sheep?

There has to be something
different from a book
for those who do not read.
Who do not disdain.

Desert thorn trees,
catalogue of moans,
sign language of the recent dead.
I tried over and over

until I turned into a story
and a story always gets it wrong.

25 December 2010

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There is no now in now.
All time packed in
spitfires pool sharks sandwich men
bronze greaves of the Achaeans
luminous handlebars.
Wgo goes there? Nobody comes.
Nobody anymore
is a door. Hollow manners
lie in wait, know naught
of what you're waiting for.
And why. Sometimes
sunrise is just an old man coughing.

25 December 2010

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Are there windows in it
so a heart looks out and sees
the simple namable things
animals come out of the woods
and still not much knowing,
not much known. Candles
in the noontime do
what you do too. But trying,
always trying. The smell
pleases—beeswax, soy wax,
something gentle, natural
even, if fire could be natural.
Some midnight a dog will talk
quietly with a horned owl
and everything will be settled.
Dawn will do a different day.

25 December 2010

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Always begin with the beginning.
Am I didactic? I just write down
what I am told. I am the good disciple
of an unknown master, I study
beneath some mind that might be mine.
Who needs to know? We are all
caught in these beautiful meshes
together. Listen hurtlessly.

26 December 2010

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Do so many things fall
if I try to count them?
Angst rubble fills up the mind.
Things move by themselves.
Things pursue. Trees
quiver in the wind, trees fall.

I'm sick. I can't leave
the world in this condition,
have to save it
from the blizzard today
the war every day.
It's up to me, of all people!

And there's nothing I know how to do.
Conversation music, a small provincial
orchestra talking quietly to me,
a cello soloist in the easy registers
soft as a debutante nibbling petit-fours.

Small moves. The small moves of maybe
maybe will save us. Dear god
I used to love these things,

once they lived inside me,
the feeling, your flank and side
when you towed after showering,
your body, your quiet efforts
drying skin. Now where are they?

Do we feel anything but pain?
And is the pain even ours?
Isn't it Bernhard's or Céline's or Genet's,
some left-over desires rotted in the chest.

26 December 2010

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Nothing is the same
but there is no same

serene thought
night style

and who were we married to
those whiles?

I was so sorry for the sun
and fear the fuss of winter

I write down my fears
to say them away.

26 December 2010

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Being young is when
you don't notice the weather

you pay no attention
to what just happens

only to what you want.
Only to getting it.

26 December 2010

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Those things that porter us to Erebus
then ride us back, bent low we are
beneath our ripened desires
when will turns into consequence
and snow hurls sideways up the road.
All men have seen ruin.
Cold or hot it comes the same,
the solar plexus punch of it,
the squeeze of rational fear.

But I want to talk about
the sleek affinities
that lure us into danger,
what the nuns used to call
the 'occasion of sin.'
As if sin fell
and we just stood there
panting with desire
or curiosity for the wrong
at the wrong time.

But it doesn't fall—
it makes us cross the road
and knock on a foreign door

and who knows who will answer
and what language our leprosy will speak.
Our ruin. Our affine relations.
Things we chose to choose us.

26 December 2010

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Truth is never obvious

it's never even there

it's always here

deep embedded in the mirror

the one thing you don't see when you look in

black swan on a moonless midnight lake.

27 December 2010

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They look at me
as at a weird stranger

I obey the laws. try
to read the weather

and sing a lot, too loud
maybe, maybe that's why.

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Then the pen leaked—

“everybody wants to get into the act!”

I can’t help it, remembering old comedians,

civil wars, nickel subways, mini-skirts,

I can’t help it if I remember Carthage,

I still have Dido’s slipper

the one she lost waltzing

into the fire. Plum velvet, gilt stars,

largish foot for a woman.

She would not gladly leave the earth.

I can’t help it that I remember things

that never happened

or only in books that schoolboys read

trying to break the stranglehold of their own

beautiful language—free your thinking

from language by language!—

till I am everything I know, and then some.

And even less.

27 December 2010

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I want to be alone in my own mouth
day I know nothing about

day the first church burned down
bucket brigade down Brown Street

where is the water
in the Chinese vase under the hydrangeas

where is my father
in his tee-shirt hurrying with the men

to put out the fire
the fire would not go away

May 20th, 1939 the Internet tells me
so I am three and a half. It is my first memory.

And why can't flowers
put out fires?

And where is the out
to which the fire goes

if it obeys the shouting desperate men
if it obeys my father?

28 December 2010

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The difference between us

I believe the lies I tell

or telling makes everything the truth.

28 December 2010

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I am an old pen from the border regions

I hardly write smoothly any more

no smooth

I write to resist

writing what I wrote before

yet those twelve tones seduce me

the whole secret human life from C to B

right under your hands

every song an imitation of

the one you're looking for

you'll never find it with your ears

your father's voice on the stairs

the roses buzzing with annoyance why

did I forget to water the wind?

28 December 2010

