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I am lying down
and want to lie
down deeper
lie down lying down
and then lie down again—
I go two lie-downs
down. The phone
rings far away
I don't want to sleep
I want to lie down
deep and lie down
deeper into waking,
lie down and lie down
until I'm fully awake.
Can I lie down
as deep as there is
to be? I try.
The phone stops
ringing. Its silence
accuses me upward
into the dazed morning.

1 February 2011

RITRATTO

Walking closer to the line
he becomes the line.
He is a narcissist
not narcissus.
She is a pronoun
outside his mind.
No flowers—what
good is a flower?
No clear rock pool,
water benefits
only the needy,
he has no needs
he is a line
he follows himself
he thinks there is
a book that tells
about him so he
writes it again
and again but the line
never ends,
a line is to go on.
That is the meaning of a line
to be somewhere
always on the way

to somewhere else
that is a line.

2.

We see him in the fine
falling snow now going away
he seems to be
of the same substance
as the trees but he moves,
birds fly through him.
someone else's line
means nothing
when you fly your own
o the lines of birds
left in the sky
haunt him
they tease him
he studies geometries
the calculus of vectors,
the crooked lines of branches
the straight lines of birds
confuse him
every footprint in snow
is some new word
he had learned
and forgotten,
he is pleased

with his progress
all these sciences
protect him
from what he sees.

3.

We don't see him now,
snow fills up
the places where stood
slowly, we know
he has to be somewhere,
a line always is,
he divides the world
of the knowable
into helps and hindrances,
what will extend
is line, a line
can go up a wall,
we can learn about him
only where he goes
we don't know
the geometry of his
desires, a line
has no color no texture,
we get bored
by the integrity
of his self-projection,

his kind of person
puzzle us
with their simplicity,
everything is about him,
we suppose we should
honor him for his
singularity, should erect
a statue of him
he already is,
we should try to forgive him
for passing through us
looking neither right nor left.
Are we really more
than the phantasms
he sees us as,
mere obstacles to his line,
irrelevant chatter?
We would like to believe
we are more than lines
passing under and over
other lines, we're not sure,
he still annoys us
long after he's lost in the woods.

1 February 2011

SIGNATURE

Let me try at least
to come there, flower,
where the month begins
in light, fierce cold
in blizzardry but light
the turnings, the palimpsest
of objects under snow
the principles by which we live
why is my breath so short
what is morning but interruption
but of what, what parrot
screeches intelligible noise
let me try to shout
louder than nature then
who am I if I plant seed
in snow and set firm
my cornerstone in the sky
frivolous beauty!
bold remonstrancer of age!
are there somethings waiting
and why a bollard
if no ship floats in
and why an avenue
when the houses empty

and the spirit trapped
in old wooden matter
cracks and creaks
under the owner's tread
the farmer's children
suck sap from trees
and feel good about God—
is that the true America?
what about the linden tree
the broken glass
I keep finding on the lawn
from windows smashed
eighty years ago
they work their way
to the surface through the dirt
they come home to the light
because the surface is all
the surface is oil
we smooth it on
what was once our skin
now it's just daylight
or the sky the huge glass
between us and the Rest.

2 February 2011

ADULTS

But what are they wanting with their hats
with their umbrellas and pastel rainboots
with their smiles? Why do they smile?
Am I an animal who has to be humored
hoodooed into silence by a glimpse
of raised-up cheeks, their gleaming teeth?

2 February 2011

STORMS AND CATASTROPHES IMPENDING

One gets tired of anxiety
and shrugs and gives it up,
let what happens happen.

But what if this rodent
anxiety is the very force
that keeps the worst away?

2 February 2011

(from yesterday, waiting for the worst)

PASTORAL

Let for let an eagle
lifts it *Ope!*
the shepherd said the cloud
and lambled it
all gone
left with a strange word
to fall a story from
for winter when
the lambs are new.

3 February 2011

ANGUAGE: THE MENDICANT

How we otherwise. Slim
pickings round the hydrofoil,
the girls save spare change for the meters,
my pishke rattles hollow
with all my godly works half-done.
Still, I love the interact,
makes me actor, not beggar,
the tin can does the begging for us both
while I just smile and mum and murmur
some other language I pretend to speak.

3 February 2011

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It is the nature of religion to be other.
Sacer. Get out of town, cross the line,
spill the dreams, hide in the unspoken,
put the cat back in the bag. Such
animals we. Without any chrism
self-anointed. Broomless we fly.
Without a shadow we pass easy through
your mirrors and stand in your boudoir.
You're getting dressed in the half-light
but what you put on is the look of us,
unknown diseases you caught in dreams.

3 February 2011

THE ECONOMY

Seems sinister. City
matters far away, the trash
of *doxa* fills the papers.
Absence of rigor.
Covenant with its throat
torn out. If this house falls
or that sea comes in
someone will profit. Our toy
world is made like that
runs on solid fuel half
lust an half revenge.

3 February 2011

= = = = =

Who was I saying for, and whom?
Red Rider. That name from childhood
I never read. I was the Read Writer
a New Yorker, owner of a dialect,
d/t confusion, fond of fakery like any kid,
fakery and bakery and Ronnie's white panties
what more could a kid from City Line demand?
Learn to speak like an adult. No more
make-believe. Just tell lies.

3 February 2011

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It runs to remind.

I was afraid to take hold.

I was no tree, no foreign country
no bottle on the windowsill
gathering time's elixir in lavender.

I was the man on the other side
of the table, who spoke some words
low and fast you couldn't hear
and weren't sure you wanted to.

3 February 2011

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These kinderszenen these mistakes
these fragments self lets itself remember
to keep the real drama hidden safe—
each thing I remember is a terrible key.

3 February 2011

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Assertion of the leaf
sparse brown ones
held on the oak
in front of where I work
as if what I do
for a living is also
part of nature,
could it be, all
the formulae and fuss
will brave the winter too
and springtime come?

4 February 2011

= = = = =

I wanted to write
with the clarity
of an insider
so learned the alphabet
and studied letter
as they danced through
ranks of words
until I got the gist
of how things move.
By the time
I could walk I could talk
but I loved best
what was to come
the silent conversation
of pencil, fat books
to feed on all day long,
talk's too nervous,
they eyes get jittery
with all your faces
when people speak
but smooth they move
as a late summer brook
when the book opens.

4 February 2011

SACRAMENT

Whatever is quiet
is secrecy enough.

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Those far-off earth-like planets they keep discovering these days—people surmise they may have their Shakespeares on them. But even if they do, and even if those fabulous texts could somehow find their way to us, would we read them? We don't much read our own scriptures, or study our own great works. Most human art, in fact, might just as well be posted on an immensely distant star.

4 February 2011