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Knowing something again to want
 something from you but what I don't know
 there are so many to be simple again
 after all the numbers one lying quiet there
 where the light comes down a stranger
 in your clothes I need to know the rigor
 of understanding so rare the soft urgency
 not even knowing what there is to know
 prediction breaks blond hours elapsing
 the snow never stops

or because a sentinel
 strands conscience at the doorway
 yard stretching out sunrise the invisible
 excites me to demand something of you
 from you it comes with the morning knowing
 what it is what it for its own sake
 wants to be wanted what
 harsh profession necessity

argues more

the snow stops of course things do
exeunt in mysterium vanish also in not knowing
but not knowing is also a way of singing
hymned to some deep part of even you
I wander the cold numbers all the way to.

5 February 2011

AUTORITRATTO

Learning to answer the question
being loud—these skills
imported from childhood
like olive oil from a lesser Greek island
are all I have to go outdoors with,
Snug in my lair I lie listening.

5 February 2011

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Stand before the candle flame
until your shadow
dissolves in that small fire.
You are free now certainly
like a lizard on sandstone, morning.

5 February 2011

= = = = =

So many things I asked of myself's world
a mirror a grapevine a millstream
cliffed over a turbid river a cup
to drink water you once saw yourself reflected in
thus a marriage of sorts an equipoise of energy
old white horse browsing in a neighbor's field
a stone wall a rosary with every bead
a different shape and color different
substance a calendar a wolf and all
of them came true the way things
left to themselves naturally do
and even the pilgrim falcon he's here too.

5 February 2011

MOSTLY WANTING NOT DECLARING

agencies of renewal all the layering
lingers wanting it all
nervous peachtrees Brooklyn winter
burlap-wrapped with sticky fingers
understood the masque of time
no solid body in there her
skin against the amber pressed
and the fig trees of Berkeley stood
naked before (there is no time
there is only space how long
the hallway is) as if the usufruct
of all space she was lifted into the morning
act of devotion first taste of the world
no more as if no more what is remembered
the real is never remembered
telling stories keeps the snow away
the bears of Barrytown listen in small dens
where will I find my slip of slate
to reckon my sums because waiting is now
where is the syenite smooth of the Queen's lap
warm Nile no more questions
the real is over no more proposition
palm trees exclusively and wet shoes
and a cup that comes apart in your hands
but the milk holds its shape lifts

itself to your lips the way things do
being anxious in your intelligence
the light switch the twirling Dervish
I feel the afterimage of your skin
she lay down on the window sill said
write on this no more memory
no more past nothing more to come
forget what you thought you meant
and only mean now what I was saying?
no more pronouns no more personas.

5 February 2011

THE GENRE OF IT

What can I call it, not an epic for it is not verse, not a saga for it has no family, what can I call it, *a logic*? The long logic of the Christian tradition, from Paul to Charles Williams—it makes a great, vast, poem (but not in verse, not an epic), a poem by thousands of voices whispered or shouted into place, voices subsumed into one complex structure, a story you can tell a child in ten minutes or spend your whole life decoding. (So too there is the logic of the Buddha, the logic of Abraham.)

All those poets, grumpy theologians, ecstatic visionaries, scholastic summers-up, heretics, lunatics, quietudinous sages, all of them drawn by the immeasurable gravitational field of the Incarnate One into speaking the poem onward. A cathedral built of voice and image and time.

6 February 2011

WELFARE

Welfare is waiting glass architect
box the poor rat them in nests
Stalin showed the way smite everyone
into small clefts in hugeness
till they die to themselves we do
to the poor how can we even speak
the agent of desire the broken sun
pavement snow no forgiveness
till we do not do then it all comes back.

6 February 2011

= = = = =

The agreeable mind of a purple window
lures the lover into gaunt chapels
(why does lover always look like male
can't she love me too and strive?)
there they sit together or apart
attuned by colored light
the oldest trick of all
gasping down from heaven
they have a thought they share
God help them now
sharing is fatal, its quality
haunts their heart's throat—
blue thunder
from the other window
God send a little yellow
sense in their red minds.

6 February 2011

CONVERSION

Call me spirit nautch
respond in me the thoughtful
carapace on high we dance
those am of us who do
do so hoodoo
to break through it is from a time
behind you the store room
where the noises are at night
did the cat get in or who
is it you take off your shoes
shine the teakwood better gloss
of us is some dance too
my zombie partner her oafish mate
change religions the way you change shirts
nothing is left of faith but color
but if you have done well then color
lasts in the mind or as the mind.

6 February 2011

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Find the word
to let it find me
two deer
on a white hill
just like France
but here
eleven wild
turkeys walking
on the snow
up the ridge
stop to dance
six of them
in a whirl of circles
fight or mating
then they climb
into the trees
only two colors
white and other
that strange familiar
not-grey not-brown
the woods take on
try to name it
the animals are gone.

7 February 2011

= = = = =

Do I know enough to give you a picture
of it? No. Or a pattern in the snow,
can I read it as speaking to the both of us
something we can learn from, or go
further in our shapely lives to find the form
their shapes and our own seem to imply?
To trust without knowing. Like a bird the air.

7 February 2011

= = = = =

These sounds are Berlioz
speaking the language of art
in the land of the dead. Why
are we listening only
to the sound of the sound,
why not the hidden melody
of what the dead are
always saying to the living
or whoever we think we are?

8 February 2011

= = = = =

But are they waiting?

They wear ordinary clothes

jeans mostly sometimes

a skirt, they drink herbal tea

bent over their laptops

and the world changes.

Only for me. How can they be

so powerful, like music.

They are letters from home,

that comfy parlor in twilight

where I have never been.

But where unknown to us all

they are waiting for me.

8 February 2011