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TRANSFIGURATION

Lying awake I slept
the rain turned into snow as it fell
winter thunder

Do you know (I suspect you know)
how hard it is to live in a world
when everything is speaking?

So call out to me
and see if I can also hear
the actual message someone intends me

probably not.

I listen to crows.

I parse the shadows the bare branches cast.

*

Because I fear

I may hear you calling me

but the 'you' you call will not be me

and I will stand there pierced

by desire to be the one addressed

when I am just a resounding surface

dumb rock in the river of your speech
and you mean some love or loath beyond me—
if the words don't mean me I can't mean the words.

*

No wonder I read the way things fall
and listen to the wind
rearrange shadow patterns on the snow
my cold kabbalah

because it never means me
this thing you say
it opens my door and calls
then runs away

I stand looking out at the empty morning
wondering why I have heard.
We are called humans
because we talk past one another

always aiming at some god or idol
only the speaker can see
never me.

*

We are called human because
the words go through us and hurt along the way

to whatever earless monster
of love or tenderness they try to find

we are called humans
because we listen and don't hear
the word you mean me—
do you mean me?

*

We are called humans
because we want and don't know

we are called humans
because we don't know

we are called humans
because we cry out and don't know who we're calling

but then we're called human
because we forget

*

So suppose you really were naked
as you suppose, your body that is,
the thing we are given to display
if to be present is what's demanded,
suppose you were really there,

who would see?

Who lives in that little room
inside the mind
camera memoriae
the chamber of mindfulness

who stares at you and measures
the due proportion of your shine
the apparent of you
how many cubits, how many miles?

*

Suppose I had no word—
they call us human because we have no word
no call of our own, no *Lockruf*
Rilke heard in some magpie morning,

we have to make a word
or some journey to find one
then speak the thing we made or found
against the silence of the other.

They call us human because we have no other.

25-26 February 2011

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To have more of this
and then have more of this
until the thisness of all things
is used up and we are full

scattered around us far as we can see
are all the other things now
emptied of being this, too far
even to be that—we have used and used

till when the morning twilight calls
only an empty landscape answers,
hollow air where trees had been
and shadows still dissolving where the houses were.

The call. It all is in us now, the cock
and the volcano, the merry-go-round and the cyclotron,
nothing left outside, we don't need to remember,
it happened inside us while we slept.

26 February 2011

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When I do get close to seeing
there's no one there.
This is the Ghost Sonata
the terrible emptiness of sunshine.

26 February 2011

THINKING'S DANGER (1)

There are things you shouldn't think about
when going upstairs.

If you think them
then going up becomes a climbing
and you'll never reach the top, you'll fall.

It is all right to hear the cello
but don't listen to what it says
or the hearing becomes a rocky slope
beneath you and you lose your grip
and of course you fall.

But rise without thinking, without music,
rise and be where you want to be,
be there without going, without climbing,
when you have nothing at all in mind.
Then the real place you mean begins.

27 February 2011

THINKING'S DANGER (2)

How not to think about Julius Caesar.
Think about Augustus's daughter Julia.
But then how not to go on thinking
about Julia? We travel across endless moors
hidden pools and quicksand. Julia
is everywhere. Every sprig of heather
has her, everything that touches you is her.
It is strange to travel in a country
where there are so many Julia—
sooner or later you will reach out to her
and that will be the end of moor and mire.
You will have tumbled from a fair height
and lie there almost paralyzed it seems,
a man who thought the wrong thought and fell.

27 February 2011

POLITICS

rescued Yeats from 'that
girl standing there.' Politics
bores you. But that girl kills.

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It snowed again last night
I need my mother
her favorite white flower
unfolds around me
I reach up to feel
the skirts of her sealskin coat.

27 February 2011

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Danger here. Be away
but carry love with you.
Schumann drowned in this river
as you do now
free of the jealous emulations
of art and poetry.

You sink into suchness—
you think. But there too
she is waiting. Her face
you can't see.
You can never not see.

27 February 2011

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The realm of the senses
is pure reassurance.
But of what?

Is there another kingdom
more frightening than this one
where pain needs no instrument
and love has no avenue?

I wonder sometimes why it feels
so good just to touch a piece of wood
or feel a snowflake settle on the cheek.

27 February 2011

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Wait till the wall time
then see. A chink
where stone had been.
Alarm: a seeable
alternative! Climb over
or under but be there
where the other breathes.
And it's not just trees.

27 February 2011

RAIN

 woke to sound of. Could
long winter be yielding.
Thought of all the mornings of my rain.
San Francisco. Damascus. Darjeeling.
What is such thought worth? Rain
matters. A long distress eased.
Aggression though—notice me. Notice
me the sky says, I am here, not there.
I am where you are. Touch.
I hear the sky now walking on my roof.

28 February 2011

MIST

the air thickens.
as it is looked at. Eyes
do the hard work.
Thicker now than when
I said 'the air thickens.'
Mist on snow in trees
exalts me, why?
What do I or any pronoun
have to do with what
just happens? Beauty.
The air changes.
Delectare, Pound reminded,
to give pleasure.
Docere, to teach us
what? *Suadere*, to move
to moral action.
Mist. Behavior
of the air. What could be
more moral than the world.
It is clearing now,
thinning, moving on,
the light is winning.
The rain is softer now
the description
is almost finished.

28 February 2011

THE DARING POET

Here he sits writing about the weather
brave as a painter painting a picture of what's there.

28 February 2011