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**Give the piece of cloud
you just stole**

**to the unfamiliar animal
beside the stream—**

**they can digest the weather
better than humans can**

**and I know you really wanted
to steal a piece of the sky itself,**

**the place they went, so many
of your loves, your own,**

leaving only ashes round us here.

19 February 2013

ELEPHANT

**Ruby on its back
two rubies on its sides.
Gold legs gold trunk
uplifted. He counts
one thing at a time
and salutes what he sees.
The praise. He seems
to walk along my desk
the light comes through him
red. I am describing
something I only see.
Please forgive me.**

19 February 2013

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**Small dark canal in Venice
one of many. Why should
remembering it make me
remember my mother
and my father sitting by
an inlet of the sea back here
feeding swans nine thousand
yesterdays ago. Water
always has a sad look to it.
When I look at it I suddenly
terribly want to go home.
And the swans have flown away.**

19 February 2013

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**Asking music one more question
I feel a sudden shame
so many years it's waited for me
how can I expect anything more**

**yet when the piano repeats
what the violin just sang
it starts to ask inside me
and I wonder like a cello.**

19 February 2013

THINKING

Help Nietzsche thinking.

Help the dead

to think anew in you

not meant to scare you

the air around you

it means to wake you

take the air inside you

as a set of axioms

grinding on each other,

the dead thinking in us

is what we call thinking.

we cannot tell

what we think

from what thinks us.

must learn to prescind

but who is listening?

Now help him think,

the dead are hard of hearing

hence *music*, that special
art of being dead
for the benefit of the living.

2.

What mattered
was his worry

the music of intellect
angry at itself.

3.

To think like a flg
in fitful wind

to think like a bridge
over a dried-up river

to think like a bird
when the sky is gone

to think like an angel
in the atheist's house

**to think like snow
the way it sleeps**

**to think like a bull
in his querencia**

**to think like dolphins
in the unnamed sea**

**these things
think me now**

**I am a thick book
with the weather in it**

**I am a man whispering
his mother's name.**

4.

**But once in India
I saw a furlled umbrella
jabbed down in a rice paddy,
no one around for miles.
And this is what is called thinking.**

19 February 2012

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**The shadows of huge birds
play over the blind man's snow.
He is innocent of feeling,
he has letters in his pocket he can't read,
the birds are everywhere around him,
the snow reaches to his ankles.
No difference between road and field
between sky and a mirror.
He runs his fingers over the cold glass
and puts it in his pocket too.**

19 February 2013

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**There are people on the way here
people who will walk through cornfields and orchards
bend to the berry bush,
break their backs bending to delicate ferns,
backs under baskets,
there are people on their way here now
through the snows to be ready,
ready to stand on line and hope for a chance
to crack the skin of their fingers with thorns,
people on the way here, people
who will for a season live among us,
people we do not know.
We modestly look away when we meet.**

20 February 2013

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Shouldn't we all make the same amount of money?

That is so obvious, a child knows it,

same number of legs and arms and fingers and mouths to feed.

Take GNP divide by the number of humans et voilà.

Nothing could be simpler. One dog, one bone.

The rich stay lean in spas, the poor get fat

in desperation to get something from the system,

cheap food. And in between, the legions of the frightened,

the almost satisfied, the broken sleep, the maybe noises in the night.

Start again. Take it all away.

And divide it equally until we are children again.

20 February 2013

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**Everybody has a chance for something else.
The clouds keep telling me things
I rarely get a chance to listen —
listen with your eyes, citizen, it's your only
chance with all that music you keep playing —
music drowns out the sky — as Dryden better said —
learn from garbage trucks: they beep beep
when they back up. Music is regressive
when you're made to hear it in the street,
the store, endless murmur in moneyland.
So look up and listen at the clouds.**

20 February 2013

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**Room for another daughter
in the cave. This one
rational and sweet,
like a red rose growing on a red rosebush —
no surprises. But her eyes!
Always miles away from what I mean.
Oh lead me to that country, love,
and let its south wind be our conversation.**

20 February 2013

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**Hurry to finish what won't begin —
arguments about aesthetics
are good for the museum business —
paint the wall with words and let the children in —
they're good decipherers. Remember when you were young?
When the whole world was one
long suicide note that only you could read?**

20 February 2013

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Would they have gathered the seams and the stitches
of that great veil covers the workings of thinking
if someone had not ripped the cloth away, driven
by the lucidity of desire, the wound of want?

Presumably they were priests, wanted to heal
or help or turn our wits away from that machine
in which we squirm and squeal and call
our little squeakings the art of poetry.

They wanted to hide what we are. And you
who look at me quietly with naked eyes,
you see me frantic to release us both,
the rusty key not so different from my hands.

20 February 2013

OUTBACK OF THE PLAIN MIND

**Before we do or did
anything to it,**

**outback, the empty terrain,
where we are at the mercy of emptiness.**

Tha.mal.gyi.shes.pa

**Our emptiness or another's?
Must always be kind to what you find there**

**under the immense and noble Refuge Tree
symbol of all human culture and of mind,
vastness of space-time, air and purity, magic and law,**

some little ducks are paddling and a deer nibbles.

The outback is always calling.

**Close it can be as your own back yard
where the snow is slow to melt**

outback is a gift,

a stream jogging over rocks in rapids

Anyone you find there,
be clear, you brought them with you.

The outback is where there is no waiting —
no one to wait with you, nothing to wait for —
the outback is lean —
anything you find there has a dozen uses.

I loved using clamshells as inkwells, paint pots, ashtrays,
spice dishes, wood scrapers, or hold the rough always cold
curve of the shell to my brow,
easing headache.

It is time
for the first character to appear.
Thamal, the ordinary, the perfect one.

Is thamal not, like me, hidden in a cloud?

Clouds are allowed.

Every human is veiled. The veil
is called a *face*. The face
is meant to conceal who we really are
by providing the beholder with a graspable
identity. This identity is always false.

No one looks like who he is.

But thamal? We don't even know the gender yet —
our language requires us to specify gender of pronouns,

our sad, beautiful, sex-crazed paranoid language.

When we speak

**you still hear the squeak of chariot wheels,
the Aryan chariots rolling west through pale Europa.
The previous inhabitants (Previés) fled before them
and some of us are fleeing still.**

When he comes he will be another —

**when he comes he will already be someone else —
seeing him changes him —**

**your shadow falls on him —
oh dear God, your shadow
falls on him and becomes a part of him
now altered always by your perceiving —**

**this being also you have darkened with your love
you call it lust but I know better.**

There is no other.

21 February 2013

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**Imagine it — something like a rhinoceros
something slowly rolling towards you
with its mind on something else.**

21 February 2013

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**The way things move.
Trillium. Or autumn leaf.
Or boat to Rotterdam —
ten senses half a sailor —
and then the mighty Kraken
rises from the pool of mind
and sucks apart your constructs
house by house by name
by clock by number till
there you are again, on an ocean, with no water
and air comes back to you
one breath at a time.
But you're not allowed to count
because this is ordinary mind.**

21 February 2013

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**Not the less the perceiving
persists for you — remote energy,
parcels of red,
dropped on a starving realm —
ice and granite, kelp and sea bird
with rank flesh to our delicate lips —
the storm folds in.**

21 February 2013