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ON THE PLAINS OF RESISTANCE

No horses.

The crupper keeps the saddle
from sliding forward
up the animal's neck.

The girth secures the saddle
down round the belly,

The saddle fits the woman
or the man who rides
hard down the resistance
searching for a waterhole.

The water is for the horse.
People don't drink much water,
though use it for other things.

This is called resistance.

Or it can be tied to the tailbone
or like the girth be secured
below. We people though
walk on our hind legs
so we can drape our clothes
from the shoulders or hips.

We do wear clothes
almost all the time.

And when we don't
our resemblance to horses

increases only slightly
except when you're on all fours
looking for a lost contact lens
and snorting with annoyance.

The resistance
makes small objects disappear.
The light of the bedroom window
rides on you bareback and I think
about the wide deep grasslands
south of Dakota, the light
rippling over it. And I resist
doing anything at all.

And am not even an animal,
I am a memory on two legs
but at the moment I remember
I was lying down. See, you knew
if you waited long enough this
would all turn out to be about me.
Remember I said at the outset
there are no horses. No horses at all.

24 February 2013

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**Once was a little room
that had us in it**

**and there was closeness
true but not much skin**

**and for one of us
the skinlessness called**

**the closeness into question
because he was only**

**what he was, a man
on earth and only some**

**of his head in heaven.
And his heart was here,**

**too close to you for comfort.
In that little room**

**everything was possible
but nothing done,**

**inappropriate means
to treat what is not your**

**own as your own.
And nothing was.**

And nothing is.

24 February 2013

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**So there is no silence.
A sound once uttered
never stops. The wind
repeats it and all
summer the crickets
repeat, repeat their hymn.
Nothing ever stops.
Be careful what you say.
Even in deep sleep they
say someone is talking.**

25 February 2013

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**Every morning earth
reassures the sky.
Breathe for me,
you brought me here
now take care of me.**

**Nothing more wonderful
than the net of obligation
in which we stir our lives.
Make the rose responsible.
Live your whole life
for the man across the street.**

25 February 2013

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**Set a chair and a table
in the middle of a field.
See if a business grows
up around it, or a whole
house maybe, maybe
furniture breeds too
and space knows how
to enclose whatever
we have in mind.
Set the table.
Sit on the chair.**

25 February 2013

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But the land left behind
 hides the hoofprints of its horses
 oxen too have shambled through its muds
 and we have followed them
 Greeks that we still are,
 trying to understand.

Ara, a plow
 to open up *aretz*, the earth, the ground.
 We are named for Eden and came late.
 Back then we thought the gatekeeper
 was some sort of God, he was uniformed
 in light and spoke in the lower
 octaves of authority.

How were we to know
 that he was one of us or we of him?
 The trees were full of Chinese apples
 and every fruit said Eat Me
 in all the languages to come—
 are you surprised we stayed so long?

History only began when we got bored
 with waiting for something to happen—
 objectivity demands you leave the garden
 where nothing happens—so we thought

**and there we were, where you are right now,
following plausible footprints up from the brook
to see where people like us were coming from
as if we could go there too. Forget it,
just be you as far as you can. A footprint
like history is something to forget.**

25 February 2013

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**As if there were our answer:
the woods full of sound, their own sound.
Close your eyes and know who you are.**

**Now follow flashlights through dead ferns
scarps of snow left under ledges—
who is there? What do you find?**

**When you go questing anything can come along
it wasn't there before you looked for it,
*the terrible evidence, the body, the word.***

**The word is a crime. Everything
is your fault. All the lights in the woods.
The night. The loss, the voices. Sobs.**

25 February 2013

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**And then it was the middle of the night
(but sister the darkness has no middle)
and the woods pretended to be still again.**

**No noise but wind and undergrowth
and small persons at their businesses.
Fluency, that's what this night needs,**

**so often it just seems to stand still—
and dreams are always waiting, dolors,
desires. Let me wake, Then let me wake.**

25 February 2013

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**She wakes and dismisses him from mind.
There is sunlight thrown on the floor
and this has to mean something. Something
about outside and trees and going places.
Her legs are sore from the day before
all that hiking at the mall, standing, watching,
waiting. Needing. Needing. Once
she stood on a corner and found herself crying.
Who needs this. Sunlight on the door also,
a thing that can open. Anybody could come in.**

26 February 2013

THIS

1.

**This wants
to be magic.
A bird or better
echo of battle
no one harmed,
A crow specifies,
be specific. Magic
always is.**

2.

**Merry-go-round
when we were children
the horses were false
but our thighs were real
and gripped tight
to such a bright
illusion and we rode!**

3.

**We were Christians
and Jews in those
days, not much else.**

**Made magic easier
because we knew
there is another side
to everything. The horse.
Gold lion I rode,
green dragon car
the mothers sat in
we all went round.
And found The only
place there ever is.**

26 February 2013

ARS POETICA 26.II.2013

The definition of anything is something else.

Another thing entirely.

**All I want to teach you is the edge
of anything. Cherish the edge.**

**Find the edge in what rolls
out of mind or mouth. The edge
is where we listen. Where we feel.**

26 February 2013

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If white is not a color
make things white.

Why?

 And black is black too,
blæc, an old absence,
absence always goes two ways.
Or bliss of solitude
soothing as the smell of bread baking—
things melt, spirits
confused with bats
fluttering through the streetlamped
streets of east of New Lots
así pasan 60 años and Lorca
even by that time was dead.
He knew the touch of things,
he carried it with him
wherever the dead go.

27 February 2013

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**The path and the goal
have to be the same
or we would never get there.**

**What is an angel?
An angel is the friend
who keeps hiding the gate.**

27 February 2013

N

**I think of his sufferings,
his willful endurance
of his own idiosyncrasies—
no cure for wanting to be other—
and the music poured around him
then he shook it off like new-fallen snow
or buzzing insects in a loud swamp.
He never understood the sea.**

27 February 2013

ABROTANUM

months away
a bitter green thing
waits for me
once at my house door
growing, now just grass,
only grass. The door
itself is gone, the house
has grown another mouth.

The snow defines. Edges.
Inscriptions. *The flower
of the skin.* A cup of snow
I brought in, heavy,
crystalline, drenched with sleet.
I feel it flower in my fingers.

27 February 2013

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**We'll call the color of water X
and the color of the night sky
on a cloudy night at the dark of the moon
we'll call Y.**

**Something
travels inside color,
colors, something hidden
in the gleam of seem.
You spend your life trying to find out
what it is and what it means.
It comes towards time after time.
Or they do, for they are many,
as many as colors are.
As many as the freemen
who come out of their houses
one last time on winter nights
and say that they want to check
if it's still snowing, but really
to look up at the half-cleared
sky and see Orion
who holds the north
safe from what might yet be
out there and long above.**

27 February 2013

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**One of these days incarnate as myself
and rid the town of this impersonation —
sunrise, the actual!**

**Who can read
the thoughts of the gondolier
his back is turned, he pulls
his black craft away from us
into a tunnel-narrow canal
off the lagoon —**

**can a boat go into a house?
Can he be remembering sunshine,
do we store our fantasies with all we need
to go so blithely into the dark?**

27 February 2013

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**A tour of the rain,
guide you
through all the swift
declensions of water
from heaven and why.**

**Be guided through movement
— not as urgent dragomans
crowd the innocent traveler
through pyramids and agoras —
no, resist the stationary, tourist,
travel only through what passes
faster than you can,
 be guided
through rain
 the rain
investigates the ancient stalwart
temple of your body
as it sleeks by.
Say that it learns from you.
Say it takes the shape and feel of you
down to mud and back up to sky again.
Say you too are written in the world.**

28 February 2013