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THE GIFT

**To give you something
never made in this
world before, a gift
from the world to the world
entrusted to you
somehow guided by me
into your hands.**

24 January 2013

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**I didn't know where I was going
or what I wanted there
I walked slow slow
to let the place catch up with me**

**and there it was, a tree
made out of glass but with real fruit
a kind I'd never seen before
opalescent yellow cream and sweet
when the soft rind yielded
to even the slightest touch**

**sweet in a pale forgiving way
as if it pardoned me
for all the meat and blood I'd drunk
and now said No
No more taking life to live.**

24 January 2013

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**Is it here yet
that tomorrow made of glass?**

24.I.13

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**The examining air
pours in round our bare arms
but it could be a harpsichord we're hearing,

or the voice of a poet from Benin
whose lines seemed graven on his face
one of those faces that tell the whole story
or as much of it as white men can bear to read.**

24 January 2013

NERO

**The emperor does not see well
he needs his hands
on what he loves**

**he needs everything to come close
but what if when it touches him
he loathes it**

**what can he do then
the touch lasts so long
the wrong touch wrong skin**

**and so it is the city's fault
the empire's fault
that brought such people to him**

**a wise man from the north
ground and polished a big emerald
for him, a quizzing lens**

**that made far away things
look close, close
and sharp and green**

**but there too, once
someone is has been seen
the seeing lingers**

**rhe hands of all his eyes
are spoiled from looking
it is the world's fault**

**the womb that bore him
into a world where each thing
tries to be beautiful and fails.**

24 January 2013

EN BLANC ET NOIR

1.

But it was a piano

It stood

exactly on the center

of an empty room

32 x 21. It made

no sound.

I'm sure of this

because a room

of any size

is always listening.

It would have told me

if it had heard

Couperin or Liszt or Art Tatum,

a room always tells what it knows.

And I'm always listening.

2.

**Silent instrument, not even a breeze
to sift through the strings,
windows sealed, door closed.
How did I even get in?**

3.

**A white truck delivers
white men to a white house.**

**This is no dream
I stand broad waking.**

**We are the colors of ourselves
forever. Or till it tells.**

4.

The black part was the piano

small black keys

in a white room,

small black keys

minority lift above

all the flat white keys.

If only someone would speak

Beethoven through those teeth.

The lateral iron harp

the metal strings

cold coiled wires, felted softwood pads,

a lid could break a wrist if it fell.

And so quiet. The hammers

narrowly sleeping.

5.

Approach?

Si.

Touch.

Just

one key.

D.

It has that feel

of going somewhere

start of a journey

in good shoes,

sun at your back.

Everything

far away.

6.

A piano has no mother.

That's why it's always sad,

the happiest it can get

—stride, barrelhouse, 32

Variations on a Waltz

by Anton Diabelli—

is only when it can forget

the dead tree, iron foundry,

scream of steel wires stretched,

no mother, no mother, brass

feet some joker gave it,

wheels! Wheels on silence!

7.

**Now it is alone in the room,
has somehow gotten rid of me.**

**Now it is praying
and we must imagine the god
its vacancies conceive,**

**imagine the eternal reverberation
into which it hopes to soar**

**powerful and silent as an eagle
floating far above an empty highway
or a steel bridge as it begins to snow.**

25 January 2013

OTHER PEOPLE'S GODS

Who are they? Why?

People all have their own.

**Are there as many gods
as there are men and women
or more, more?**

**Make each child describe god—
children know more about it
than the rest of us, much more
than theologians can, they think
too much and talk much too much
and spend too little time knowing.**

**But children know, that's all
they're good for, don't you remember
when you stood alone on the street
and knew? Child you were,**

tell me what is god?

How does god sound

when you're all alone?

25 January 2013

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**Lead a horse by a feather
ride bareback all
the way to the hall of presence
where Mawet judges,
discerner of deeds—
dismount, stand naked,
and if you've done something
big or bad or better
Mawet might blink one eye
or rouse a moment
from eternal sleep.**

25 January 2013

DAY ONE-AJPU

Full moon of the sinner
now why do I know this
how can one man know
anything of time

 unless they tell him,
all the whoms who came before,
victims of natural perception,
agents of taking note of things.
Gives agency to children the magazine
said, reviewing a book of fairy tales
and to women,

 the primal agents of the world.

Rescue operation. Reclaiming
poetry from literature,
 lit from scholarship,
scholars from the academy,
 the academy from industry,
industry from money—

one step at a time, chief,
save Christ from Christianity,
 save religion from an angry god,

**save god from human imputation,
save god from men who know god's plan,
save humanity from me.**

I am the only agent, and I fail.

26 January 2013

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**Tether the horse
to the idea of horse
and see if it can
still run over the hill.**

26 January 2013

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**The sun Donne called busybody
dissuades snow's meek frosting now
and words clumsy me in my consenting
to watch, love, just watch that wading in.**

Daytime is dreamtime.

**The sky is slow — this means you
are vivid the same blue, orchestra
know thy place, spirit keep the tally:
bracts of lost flowers, the snow at sixes.**

26 January 2013

