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210.

Now of the cicadas from their long sleep
awoke and bred and did and sang and now to bed again
a year for them is seventeen of ours and what are we to some glorious animal
eloquent in hyperspace our spit their silver
because we make much of things
art is Latin for the way of making
the way of making is so much our way
our childish wits suppose we too were made
no god ever had the art of us
we came out of the sea and from the ground
we mated in bold daylight and we did
and we do.

(1 July 2013)

211.

If a thing can be itself and still go on
that is the raw meat in the rhapsode's song
people all over pretending to be me
clear as Chesterton in the gloaming of the evening
would I were my father's favorite word
not twitch so while I'm saying so
I can hardly read the word I write why I need you
there are spirits here antagonists of air
or is it prayer that sifts all round us and we breathe in
what could the word be that scents the garden of Adonis
sacrifice means making it taboo only gods can have it
what would the world be like if we were in it.

212.

Every a trick question do you smoke
no I quote
comparisons are bad for the environment
don't sit next to me while you're quoting
I never want to hear what wise men said
do you think I want to walk out in someone else's clothes
don't make such a fuss just forget about it
forgetting is the hardest thing of all
that's why you fled your island isn't it
that's why you sailed up the dark river where not even the trees knew you
that's why you write down what other people say
you make them up to talk to you so somebody remembers.

213.

Forgive that little *lude* a play between all the going on
I lost the knack of not answering myself
I stand accused of lying down a folly to the Greeks
of rising up again at cock-crow and my people know me not
for I was married to a windmill and a lake
in summer rain every green a different color
I put it down meaning to revere it later
but then the Cossack horseman rumbled through that aching shtetl of my
brain
and who knows now where my reverence went
13 Jews at a long table telling the joke that is God
yet when he was lifted up healed all the world but not himself
sunrise from the earth he had no self to heal.

214.

**I'm still with Abbot Benedict still with Malory
cannonshot was supposed to be the end of us
the middle time we called it when we were young in it
now it's only now and Internet is our Maimonides
everything lasts everything changes no one remembers
pleasure is the only gift study how to please
it lasts as long as Christmas does twelve years and come again
I want to know the cycle of each thing
lifespan of the chickadee of Niagara
of me for that matter but nobody knows
how well we'd live if we knew the date of our demise
olé! I die today.**

215.

So pleasure it is, pleasure and praise
the rain has stopped the colors last
don't look back it's only a flower gaining on you
only a womb anxious to reclaim me
the last night on the island I saw in the dark exact my mother's face
let me learn to say this countenance
expressionless veridical completely there
to be fully seen is to be present
have I lived up to anything she proposed
we don't know what we ask of one another
what we give we hope is what was wanted
such gifts are absolute no giver no receiver.

216.

Solitude, light rain, kindness to strap the sweat to his back
let him go the world's big enough
to be big enough for the smallest words
argent, a tower gules and then he said
from this window she can see anyone who comes and goes
but everyone is upside-down
man coughing in the morning breeze
how does she keep all that she sees from floating away
to build a thing and then believe in it
a tower or a testament
Dostoyevsky railed against chemistry
the bonds that love us into one another's lives.

(1 July 2013)

217.

This is Book VIII of the Aeneid

we go inland here

the dark river loves us

into the unknown interior of your house

where the trees hang over the slow waters

when we look down to see our faces we see nothing

the water has faces of its own

animals (this is all about animals) begin to talk now

we write home saying “animals talk to us now

what are we going to do with our silences

our precious silence?” but no letters come back

deer run into us we can't understand the crows.

218.

I thought she was grieving in her ogival cloak
her white face but when I tried to console her
she was laughing and comforted me
she put words in my mouth I woke half-healed
have to live the clear thing not just know it
her word was sweet and I spoke it all day
in the dark country where everybody lives
keening sometimes or laughing at the faces
peering out from the hillside ancient still young
their skin soft as lamb's ears pale as mistletoe
they look as if they remember me
but who am I now?

(1 July 2013)

219.

**Sometimes finish something or be enough to begin with
'a balanced aquarium'**

Antin explained when we were kids

so much I learned from him I'll never admit

plants feed fish excrete feed plants

oxygen out of nowhere

only the sun needs helium

at the other end of its cosmos last dream's gentlest touch

thrill the way a bird does or morning light

mockingbird on the bridge in rain

where herons often glide from pond to bay

I'm gasping for breath airless in Gaza

to see me suffer puts the leaves to sleep.

220.

Night stuff thick

ankles of consciousness

slow drag a thickened broth

a cake of beef fat given to the birds

there are days music will not listen

means that no one hears

after a month on the sea it is hard to be anybody else

say it with your hands the way the night

is religion only something other people do

glamor of the ivory corpus constantly reminds

once there was a place where these things mean

thank God we have to make our own.

221.

**Walk over there and meet myself departing
signs of death I cannot find my shoes
fifty years since I was in the Rockaways
cathedrals walk beside you when you go
once I flew over the Hadramawt and Mars looked up
the meaningless politeness of the desert
the empty cup I offer to my friends
how little I've given, how much proposed
always reach out to soften the horizon
littoral birds the afikomen found at last
set me my place at the table near the door
sometimes the sight of food makes me despair.**

222.

To measure a day by a meaning
lean crystals sift into your lap
the varieties of greens exhaust vocabulary
no need to describe what everyone remembers
but did you notice that private gesture the whole street did
Brooklyn again and Battersea and hold your hand
just hand that apportions peace and war
did I forgive all those I hurt
shutters up on the primeval coast
we help each other wade ashore
and nothing more
the gift happens the sun rose.

223.

**Do it the easy way begin with someone else
a dance in trance a rhetoric of selfishness
all we have to give our bodies are
we choose our functions in a balanced world
whatever it is it always works
that's the mind for you
no escape from the balanced aquarium
we live and die as suits another and we are the other
so relax and try to cheat less on your taxes
it doesn't work it all comes out of you
can't save can't spend can't mar can't mend
free will is an advertising ploy.**

224.

**You are the debt that has to be paid
your habit patterns are your only cage so far
stay far away from wanting more
more humility among the trees
almost all the cicadas have done their work and gone
leaving their Egyptian carapaces behind
our window screen and blacktop and the lawn
worn out from sheer song fallen
Babylonian with black and gold
I am your mother too don't you remember
London Bridge and looked upstream
into the far west we come from now.**

225.

Call it weather it will watch you burd-eyed with wary
you came to rape our fields and steal our sheep
nothing we can do to stop you but it can
it knows the way you Trojans trust in signs
the white pig nestled in leaf shadow
the cloud walking girl-like up the oak-weary hill
we will give you more signs than you can read
you'll never trust your bed again with all the dreams
this is our land and we are semaphores
we can't do anything at all but fill your senses
every sense complete and all the information false
the way only the truth can really lead you wrong.

(2 July 2013)

226.

**I never knew anything it was all made up
all bluff and prophecy
willful history of our feigned race
imaginary archive of testicular witness
none of the cathedrals were real
none of the bridges skating rinks nudist beaches
stockmarkets rainstorms or Machu Picchu
all loving lies I made for you
all Plotinus all Shakespeare Nag Hammadi
the lotus garden where the princess yawned
brass basins of the Temple the rites of man
national debt all lies and all for you.**

(2 July 2013)

227.

**So the perception of the other is the first mistake
till the Mind is peace and luminous
but once it senses other all the stuff begins
the offerings and arsenal the blood and fear
until the only cure is to become the other
sink into the other, make the glad of the other your whole work
then the mind'll be one again
full of its own serene excitements
beyond the dark and light
try it if you don't believe me
do enough for the other and nothing for me
let the ocean show the way home.**

228.

**Then again the linden trees this year blossomed
we sleep and wake in the scent of them
pale obscure little flowers that fill the night air
but am I a character in your epic
uneasy narrative of words spewing words
stochastic craziness full of ancient Greek
when I just want to smell the flowers
rest again on someone's cheek
as if the war had never shattered my electron shell
left me gasping naked on the shingle beach
before the monsters got back to the deep
and the ospreys dropped fish for me to eat.**

229.

**Long comber by the shore of ease
why did we ever leave
who are you talking to now
in red or in bed
the harsh bondage of rhyme
subtle bondage of sound
by klang alone bring matter in
will heal the legend lost souls of this pale day
find me kindling for my water
dig a hole in air and put me in
the sound of a word is a niche around me
sense turns me marble from head to toe.**

(2 July 2013)