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Being on a place's place
and blessing what you see—
intimate moment when
you and the world are alone together

tremulous as a first date
or the morning after. Sun sheen,
talk to me, cloud,
remind me of who I am.

Birds, explain philosophy.
I used to think I was somebody else.

30 July 2012, Cuttyhunk

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The rational response
as of wood to fire
one or two wild
roses still left by the shore

after the thousands bloomed
in May. High summer
and already the heather
is purple on the moor

on the far of the island
facing America
you can see it easily
from the top of the hill.

30 July 2012, Cuttyhunk

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Or I am always someone else
a little displaced from where I seem.
I have flown far away
into this turbulent
absence of meaning they call proceeding.
And I keep seeing the names of things
sea-weathered wood below my feet.

30 July 2012, Cuttyhunk

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When people read poems
they want to learn something
but not too much.

The ruffed grouse you saw
nests on the ground
in the aspen grove.

You startled it, it started
up with a loud
flurry of white-barred wings,

the lighthouse on Gayhead
glowed big white
pause, smaller red.

30 July 2012, Cuttyhunk

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You can close your eyes but not your ears.
Language is more tenacious than light
we are born blind, screaming. Listen,
it's quiet enough this morning to hear the sea.
And when the nervous system starts to wear out,
tinnitus. Ringing in the ears. And then
you are always part of a conversation.

30 July 2012, Cuttyhunk

SEA NO THINK

The burnish that quickstone
polished by the sun oiled by breezes
glistens
one patch of it in the bay

the symmetry of sun
the cloud gapped
mirrored in quickrock
the quiet sea.

31 July 2012, Cuttyhunk

IMMORALITIES

1.

Four flights of stairs
straight into the sky
to no obvious goal
except being there.

2.

A rival postcard
from a haunted beach
phantoms in bikinis
reading poems to each other.

3.

I gave you all you can
and still want more
but who? Sad
pronouns lost in the woods.

4.

Evasive energy of children
save some for later
the world's full of commandments
you need to be able to break.

5.

Lethargy as of seals
sprawled neatly on the beach
fills humans with excitement
we who pass in boats.

6.

No rest for the merely.
You have to go all the way.
Just to get your feet to the ground
before time blows you away.

7.

Interpose the animal
before you start thinking—
save your cortex
for Oedipus Rex.

8.

Irregular but organized
the leaves fall down
in your lonely mind
weary of summer.

9.

Id est shift the yellow
from sun to maple leaf
and the heat soon be done.
It seems so simple.

10.

A cure for summer
is what we're after
a distant vacuum cleaner
pink ice cream firm in the dish.

11.

Human mortals Martian émigrés
characters in comic opera
we all smell Viennese
help me doctor to have a dream.

12.

If I were king of course
every mirror would show my face
every woman would be my queen
a rose thorn would end the world.

13.

Cold wind from the sea
is a good cure for me
old languages make keenest distinctions
as if things still mattered then.

14.

Deal the cards already
the Fates are finished
with their fussing—these
spades bury your poor hearts.

15.

Place a stone on a stone
glue one word to another
listen to the wind when it's calm
this quiet sorrow is the same as art.

16.

If one of them danced
another sat by the wall
if one of them carved a man out of wood
another fell asleep during Mass.

17.

Tchaikovsky I think
made this music
to drown out the maddening
oak leaves rattling in the wind.

18.

Quintus H. Flaccus it would say
on a storefront in Nebraska
where farm wives come to buy
elegant shoes that don't quite fit the meter.

19.

Wanting to read books to be
written ten years in the future
he haunts graveyards
at dawn and listens hard.

20.

Jews print from right to left
generously, even kindly, hoping
to meet us halfway
and both come to rest on a single word.

31 July 2012, Cuttyhunk