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Sabbath quiet brings earth close
God's busy with us all the other days
today leaves us alone with what we've made.

25.IV.10.

= = = = =

Will I get home before the storm
and are the children there I do not have

they tell me water is a paradox
no reason for it not to be a solid

they say it only happens when lightning strikes
maybe it only ever happened once

and all the water now inherits that
forced godly marriage of H and O—

for water is our Eve the mother everywhere.

25 April 2010

122.

Look back on all the dogs you've lived
the days the broken rock in someone's garden

because a hammer fell and the sea rose
our frantic words are caught between silent things

language is our nervousness out loud
serene without entanglement silent twilight

speaking only to kiss
the woods are green already

nervous they wait by sewer manholes
they know something's coming

rus in urbe the terror of the forest in town
trots from shadow to shadow and finds you

I'll give you parks that make you think alive
Eden in the XIXth butte built of rubbish

the very fallen trees are radical cement
something comes of all this itchy restlessness

something like an opera or a man
balancing on a log in a long river away

a slate falls from the steeple of Trinity
a string quartet sits down to play.

26 April 2010

123.

Am I near enough to the ending to begin
wafer-witted astrophysicists rely on guess

like every other *merchant of the real*
fascist structures of new sciences

get married for the delicious shiver of divorce
I won't tell what it means it means

what happens in your head when this
happens to your ears or eyes high

bridge for random suicides down
into a river of suspect redemption

o do not leap my darlings
into the uninterpretable air

nothing sustains us like uncertainty
this thing I call love

and sometimes try to share with you
and sometimes hide among the relatively silent trees.

26 April 2010

124.

As often as I came there
you were there before me

that's where there is
the place where you always are

a place that binds me to approach
I bring my tired answers to the question no one asked

as long as language this wooden road
boardwalk by the sea alas never get wet

your eyes exactly level with horizon
you are there and thus it is almost night

I am the small figure far away you see
coming towards you over the salt-bleached wood.

27 April 2010

125.

So it all does come back to me
pity like a pop song and no apocalypse

no lips of any kind these songs are mute
the music fled you hear the echo of money only

the ribbon unwound from round her hair
falls to my fingers after all I loop it loose

over a pile of mildewed books old postcards
because every place you stand is church

home you carry in your body
honey from before Noah's flood eternal amber.

27 April 2010

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EVERY MOMENT comes closer and closer to the present, but never reaches now. There is no history or there is only history.

What would now be like if we could actually live in it? If I could eat my *potage d'aiglefin* and smile out the big windows at the lawn. If I could really be alone when I'm alone. Taste of the haddock in its warm southern broth — why does it feel like a miracle?

We are all walking around in our bodies. Sometimes you fall in love once too often and you can never climb back out. The mood turns into the mind.

27 April 2010, FDR

= = = = =

All those who waited for me know this:
a Turkish cantor ululating gibberish
into the windows of the zenana

he's almost blind, the lovely shapes
loom and quiver in the darkness
half his and half their own

women are like fish to him
in an island he's one dry island in
stung into speech by their quick forms

his eyes baffled by sunlight too
he howls out his random metaphors until
nothing happens but the fish still stay.

28 April 2010

= = = = =

SCIENTISTS tell us numbers are about themselves
first and only then about us, as if the Grand Geometer
or whoever he is had us as a kind of afterthought,
some ants and mice to play inside platonic solids
such fun for him to see. No. Numbers grow from us—
we are “their parents and original.” I am myself
the square root of three ...

THERE is a tent outside my window a pavilion maybe
where ladies sit in shade and watch our tournament.
That is me falling from the horse, me the horse is trampling,
my own horse, I am struck down by a knight invisible,
I need have no other enemies, I have me...

HOURS later the bird came down to feed. And where
have you been, small winged one of the lower air?
I have been beyond *metarsia*, I have been up there
where nobody can breathe, I think I saw God’s throne
and then I fell, almost lifeless, till the atmosphere below
revived me. That’s a lot of work for one small bird
I said...

28 April 2010

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I have unscrewed
Whitman's "flanges of words"
I have pried off the hasp
that held the lock that shut the door.
Now the wind does
whatever it wants
and nothing means anything anymore
but everything does.

28 April 2010

VARIATIONS ON W.W.

The only trouble with them they have friends
I'm tired of more than one at a time
never one for choral music
I will be a soloist among soloists
how else could the trees grow tall
and the rain divide itself in tones to come
touching us each one gets wet by oneself
language like democracy keeps pretending
to be for everybody but it's just for me,
whoever I am you're holding now in your hand.

29 April 2010

= = = = =

Are we named for what we will become
a sword lifted to catch a sunbeam
and never let fall? Still, the glint
lights up the room. A name tells
so much but who is ever listening?

29 April 2010

TULIPS

how quick they topple
over, heads down,
shed pollen on the tablecloth
how soon they fade.

But that's not how tulips
are supposed to be thought about—
they are vivid messengers
from an impossible Orient
where all the men wear crowns
and women have no faces.

Why do they falter, limp
in the vase, still lush
red as the inside of your mouth,
but falling over softly,
why do they fall?

29 April 2010

126.

When you can't tell the beginning from the end
when the empty chairs stand around you hear them talk

when they cut the ribbon stretched along the sky
a boy you sent out for milk comes home with children of his own

there are no radios in this country
we listen with our eyes now and it makes us blind

wait when the bridges over the Hudson sag at last
the catenary moment comes to every kultur

there are high points and we droop between them
when we touch the lowest point the Turks rush in

the moon we honor with our worship cracks
the big bite in her means all we're not allowed to say

we are silenced not by censors but by our secrets themselves
your unspoken vision is your whole magic power

if you tell it to the doctor it makes you weak
who am I to tell you what to do

I am the other side of your mind

I am the listener without me you're incomplete

liberty is moonlight there must be something more

but already the way you walk you give yourself away

baffled by everything open all the hydrants

I need a different answer quick

a word we use to swim upstream

live in one depth breed in another

it's like wandering around your house watering the plants

no it isn't nothing ambiguous is ever green

I placed my right hand on the images and swore

I will decipher this skin I will inhabit this picture

he wanted to dedicate himself to writing new bibles

there are saints on the street saints every window

I was born in seven places married just in one

black hotel down the corridor the moon is waiting

we get what's coming to us then the light goes off

we ate a rose last night still here at morning.

30 April 2010

THE SPOON

from Sophie Reiff's prompt

1.

Something is buried beneath this sand
is it a dog or is it a man?

A small rock with a shallow shadow
holds some sand down. You can't
keep a man dead with such
a small stone, not even a dog.

I'll use this spoon to dig it up.

2.

What will I find? Who is coming to me?
If I dig deep enough the sea will come in,
I'll open my mouth and shark will come out—
they call him *dog of the sea* but me
they call a man with a spoon. I'm
the one who set the ocean free.

3.

Behold the man in black and white
he may have a dog between his feet
he fusses with in the old snapshot.
The brick courses (English rows
or Flemish bond?) of a whitewashed wall,
hard to tell. Everything is old.
But looking at it is always new.

30 April 2010

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But in the valley of Aosta
broken spokes collapse the wheel

we go no far
in quest dark rock

one by one the population
vanishes beneath the ground.

The earth is famished for us,
ghost kings, ghost princesses of Savoy.

30 April 2010