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She wonders where the water hides
when it's not raining here
her wonder soon creates a sea
to store the weather in

then she dreams a storm
and down it comes, and through
the snow she lets herself hear
the hammer blows of carpenters

hard at work building the sky.

23 February 2010

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An old person winds an older watch
but the time is always new—

new is the little animal that hides in now,
put your ear to the clock and hear it mew.

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23 February 2010

LYRIC

ought by rights to be
on octaves strung,
strings
of beast-gut quivering
in the ancient air

round sounding horn or wooden
hollowness to voice the sound
out loud,
so lyre is emptiness
(of sense, intention, gospelling)
must be the horn or shell
to amplify the tone, no word
does a string sing,
something though
maybe words grow out
sudden from those hollow tones
that make us see
images in the mind's eye
void of anything but themselves,
naked children playing in the rain.

23 February 2010

AMARYLLIS

Let the bulb stretch back to life
winter after winter.

Crow calls. Fear of blizzard,
something on its way
coming to perplex my argument.

Tosca summons him before God
then throws herself into the sky.

Women are so literal
sometimes.

 They too
perplex my argument.
I try to say nice things to people
but I keep thinking about pennies,
old ones, how the copper
tastes in my mouth
when I am a child and hold them
as if I too had a secret to declare
worth all the stuff you hear in church
something that I could just spit out
if I wanted to, this taste, this kiss
to the world. Part of the taste
is copper, earthy, actual, true.
And this taste too is germs
I should not be tasting but I do,

the crime of risk, and this
taste is money itself, the furthest
space you can actually touch.
All these are parts of what I want to tell,
and there is more, but she
is tired of listening to my silences,
my mouth is stuffed with pennies now,
maybe with this money I can reach
around the world, can touch her hair,
buy things for them to eat.
All of them. In the crows calling outside
I hear every hungry mouth bewailing
how little I have given, how little
I have to give. Forgive me,
no one to hear, forgive me, no one
is gone. Memory is another kind of bird,
the kind that knows no winter.
As long as there's a door
for her to come through I am safe.
No actual money has been spent
only the taste of trying to tell the truth.

23 February 2010

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Someone looking
for someone else
will find me
and I will be their Grail

I have the same hope
a piece of wood has
or a stone someone else
will build a house on

a pool of water
from which people
might drink or see
reflected their

own face or the stars.

23 February 2010

43.

I am waiting on a door
a kind of food

a floor to stand on
a sky to come from

to start again
where you never were

or beside the fenceposts gaze
there is no horse you hear the hooves

something beats the earth
you are close only to closeness

prayerflags in the snow a lesson
color theory Albers in white trees

rosa-purpur from Goethe's mallow
color of being present to yourself

color of not forgetting
mauve tint of *Dasein* and a river

a man stood up
before the word was ready

then it was and then he was
we are spoken

a winter mind they said
all stored with springtime

no names please we're islanders alone
if you fall in love what breaks your fall

something always coming down
all my secrets you have sent away

to be someone else's mystery
to be oneself boring as the sky

to be someone's heart sound asleep
a dying banker groaning with desire

too many animals to have names or numbers
let me just call you you forever

and you can be whoever you want

I love you also when you turn away

24 February 2010

44.

I wonder what I'd make of myself if I'd never met me
I'll never be as beautiful as the dome of Hagia Sophia

stretched out inside my chest the inside light
and stray birds make their own way through my space

how long is this song going to forget you
for whom the world was made

marble images rot in acid rain on the Acropolis
but the dome remembers the glory of her pelvis

things nestled inside one another till you reach the sky
wherever the center of the world is

like a man watching laundry tumble in the washer
a brick lying on the road by Bagdogra I feared to touch

who knows what ground that brick was baked from
what blood or sperm gushed into its clay

a thing like that never dries out
a thing like another thing forever

I am in pain only I don't know it
the book fell open all the words fell out

they change language as we speak
a lullaby in Danish made me cry

give the little cat milk it's all we have
give the mountain darkness the dark I loved with with.

24 February 2010

45.

To run all the way home and not be there
to know something and not know you know

to be someone else's hand
what is it like inside your time

I don't want to make love I want love to make me
there is a letter written on the moon by whom

never trust a question there are too many answers
bus off the road in hill country fog

nobody hurt but nobody happy
too much singing the snakes hurry away

he dreamed he drank ink
she dreamed she brought him a single word

Roman armies hurry through fog and rain
all the words turn black inside him

a noise like a horn call comes from the sky
after bars close you hear them smashing bottles

soon it will be dawn again

what will the old moon do

is it a dark bird trapped in the attic

a wolf in my backyard come just for you?

25 February 2010

46.

Lock your backyard against the light
the turtles are tired of the roses

I named myself after a stone
you named me after fire

why do we have to dig down to get dark
isn't your sleeve dark enough or the cup of your palm

this nowhere that I call my mind
stocked with fraudulent identities one real friend

the passenger finally wakes up beside you
stretches a shy hand into your distant lap

you know the journey has some meaning then
it made you most of what you are

there is a little boy though in your other eye
study the mirror and remember

all those Irish songs the Talmud tells
you really should listen to the weather

hour by hour communiqués from the absolute
write down what it tells you and solve for x

the bridge over the Arroyo Seco in rain
rocket ships and Glendale and nothing serious

the otherworld we see in dream belongs to us
sometimes wonder if sleep is worth it.

26 February 2010

KAPUZINERGRUFT

To say risky things about the Emperor
when all the emperors are dead.
And even the frail old lady
who lived so deep into our time
through all the horrors we replaced
her gentle husband with, she's here too.

What can we say? The old one
was kind to the Jews. Even now
a big photo of him in the lobby
of the old synagogue
guarded by armored police.
Enemies everywhere. Those
who tore empire down
did the work of masters
they could not know,
the dark images inside
come to life. Democracy
made Hitler—that's
the tragic open secret.
Free men choose their masters.
Vote to be slaves
because we are already mastered
by the angry animal inside.

We write our wistful poems, Kraus's
gand fidgets beneath the desk,
we sneer and choose and choose.
I remember ten years back
standing in this Capuchin Crypt
in mild obscurity, almost alone,
sad, ignorant as any Ishmael
among these kindlier shades.

27 February 2010

47.

Knowing is so much less than going
doesn't it seem to you midnight all day long

pleasure peaks and angst lies low
and you are all your hands can hold

everybody on earth one at a time
a gold ring fits so many fingers

the fattening simplicity of everyday life
read a book for god's sake where god hides

she opened her cloak and showed the dead pope
the horror of blind is trapped with all the old images

we are trapped by every image
pay gladly for this bondage

in hell they have a scale to weigh each image
everything you see will look out of your eyes ever after

there is no end to this beginning
I walk in a cloud of some apartness

never belong to anything

not even your own body

snow limned on every tree limb

netherlandish morning low with light

greenback politics blunt the butcher's cleaver

deep down the well you see a fallen spoon.

27 February 2010

48.

Don't go walking with the dead I beg you
stay inside with me safe among the words

the snow is full of dead men to and fro
they want to lead you where the snow comes from

they lead you where the snow goes
midnight a car starts up and does not go

in fear I call the operator to hear an outside voice
I'm afraid of voices just inside my head

what if she says something crazy too
intimate detail no telephone should know

or there is no voice left in my machine
century after Tesla still can't bring the power home

the door they went through isn't there anymore
the snow was the same and the blue night held it

they walked quick where the road turned
only simple words please god only simple words

they vanished behind bushes not there either
at this nowless hour no now no then

anything worth saying is worth keeping still
I called her name softly ashamed of my need my fear

then louder not caring who heard
there was no one near I called and she answered

what if even hope can't shake the dream away
I heard her breath beside me when I woke

but the terror of losing her was still intact
fear is its own language and no dictionary

to find her again who was right beside me
I had to get up and out of the room

I had to go downstairs and stand in the light
dark is so frightening because you see so much in it

light showed the godly limited actual things around me
who do not move when I look at them

any object any hard thing is an enduring smile

I reach out to trust a cup with my hand.

28 February 2010

49.

What are the other animals doing
where are the ones who gave us their lives

gave us our lives shouldn't we thank them
what could prayer mean but being kind

kind to people no matter how many legs
or wings their minds are my mind

their minds are all we have
as we stretch up and try to eat the moon

though you can fondle it all night long
the moon eats us all

take a big breath and bite the light
swallow darkness darkness has such a clever taste.

28 February 2010

50.

He wants to live in the hear house
where all the nymphs of tell attend him

the ear is one long marriage
every morning is a prophecy fulfilled

he listened deeply in his laziness
everything was spoken everything got done

there are things like flowers with eyes
animals are things with deep roots.

28 February 2010

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Can it remember the picture
before it was taken
when there was just a woman and a terrace
and no transform of energy into image
had happened to her
or to the one who saw her?

But now the image is a man's deepest word
something he blurts out to the beautiful
anybody who comes hear,
anybody he can bother with his voice.

And sound is also an image

or the world is the image
of a sound said before.

28 February 2010

