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Come home and say the door
a voice going in.
I live inside an ancient claim.

24.III.09

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Wait on the sun side
like a memory
eating an egg
as if all Rembrandt's drawings
were of the same man.
Ich bin ein New-Yorker, he said,
gesturing to the bars on the window
and she saw! She understood
she did, who we are and how we live
the wheres we do,
half-hexed in the bus-loud shade.

When you live on a grid of streets
you have to keep choosing
uptown downtown sunny or shadowside,
Ich bin ein anything I can think of
that will make you love me,
that's all I want, a universal
effluvium of all-too-personal desire,
the smell of your mind.

24 March 2009

OVER THE ARNO

When you dream yourself writing with a pen
it is something in your future remembering your past
reminding you to remember it too: what it was you did
that somebody you will someday be wants you to think about now

was it a bridge? was it a girl standing on the bridge
watching the river while you stood watching her?
was it *watching* itself the way you don't do it anymore,
your eyes slip easy off the stanchions now, off the haunches, off the eyes

is it what she has become, whoever she was, is, will be
is she also in the *future*, that glamorous gated-community
into which you will inevitably figure out a way? think:

when you are who you will be
what will you care about
of all the mistakes around you now?

when you dream with a pen
it means love doesn't last
but then nothing else lasts either

could it be that your dream really has nothing to say
nothing to say, just like Socrates though trying to remind?
and when the day comes when you have to ask
but who was Socrates? then the meaning of the dream will be clear
shadow of a woman rippling down there on the swift river.

25 March 2009

PROBLEMS OF POETRY

1.

Cross out the parts that make sense
and read the rest—
there, that is the way.

2.

Too many missionaries,
too few islands.

3.

If I were a cannibal
I would be a better reader.
As it is I like to live
and let live. So hard to do!

25 March 2009

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Coming closer all the time

to time, the wave,

the rave of it

washing by

and suddenly I am swept
clean of time.

there is no time left

but I'm still here

to be alive and shouting on the other side of time!

25 March 2009

INVOCATIO PARVA

Write with me every day o Muse
and let me wake nestled in your noun
and your surge rouse me to resist
the easy sweetness of ordinary speech
and make it hard enough to hold
hard and glint like coal to warm us
or even diamond sometimes for you
when I loop it shy round your neck
nighttime in pure beginningness.

25 March 2009

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But something be enough to need.

Not need nothing.

A rabbi,

what does a rabbi need?

Or a strongman in the circus

what does he lack?

The earth

feeds him all day long

the beautiful gravity of his demonstration,

that sweaty physicist.

Or a man

asleep on a bench in the Poughkeepsie station

what does he need?

Isn't every destination

already safe far out on the landscape

steel rails compassionately linking?

When he wakes

he'll totter sleepy to track 2 and sleep some more

wake fully in Yonkers and the river will have kept him

safe company all the way.

Isn't everything complete already,

right now, this second, nothing missing?

25 March 2009

SEQUENCE FOR THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Went round about it the wrong way
slopes of the Taghkanics a street a coffeeshop
who knows who carries now
the angel's message in her snug pocket

or there must be a new kind of God
she sits and thinks what It will be
she drinks a frothy coffee kind of thing
and nibbles a stale blondie
gratefully, who or what will it be
that comes out of the message

out of her body even
like in the old days
a sequence of loud flowers
men eating goat cheese men eating bread
so much bread and so little wine
she wishes it were wine
in front of her now, her book

splayed open but not much read,
who are these people in a book
why are their sufferings so terrible
I can't cheer them can't help them

she thinks what can I do
to be of use

what did the angel say
tease the message out and read it again
lay it on the book even
as if it also were language

what did they tell you?
who is it going to be?
a new God

a god who will not hurt her to be born
or else a pain that goes through her
like an arrow then is gone

no wound just wonder
and she stares out the window at the sunlight
doing its own business on the street
a country town tilted uphill
they walk by dragging their gravity with them
all her sisters

and it seems to her
as a red dog trots by downhill
that she herself will be able

and be able to do something for them, all her sisters

and bring them this new God
who loves them
better than they love themselves

o the sorrow of women she thinks
the sorrow of me
we believe in everything else but me.

25 March 2009

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I want to catch a cold from kissing you
and every lover feels like this she sang
and from the octaves of her outcry poured
secret rituals of life on earth, the currency
of pathogens, the passions we exchange—
we are the money of the overlords,
they change us through their skinless hands.
Be still, she sang, and smother me, your
breath is dearer to me than my own.

26 March 2009

A HYMN TO GUNNLOÐ SUTTUNGSÐOTTIR

I need to bother you with praises
air in the column makes the flow stop
it's hard to play cards on a windy day
hard to read in the dark, culture
is so far from nature, girls and boys
joshing by iron railings in the park,
such words such words no purchase
on the skin, can't reach inside or say
their sin their shine their shoes their names
where horror and theology both begin.
Gunnloð told me this as I lay beside her
in her comfy cave dreaming me poetry
— I licked the cup she let me hold.

26 March 2009

WOLF PATH

Eyes soft
for all the golden
killing
to be done.

Hunger is a tree
that grows in them

APPETITE SPOKEN HERE

for we are similars,
breakbone suckmarrow venturers
surveyors of the live landscape,
capable of bite.

Why I like to walk here
past the spicebush and creeper-invested saplings
towards the hightop pines
where vultures nest every summer
and some come now
and lord and lady crows parley all year round loud

over this quiet gentle earth that finally will swallow me,

for everything is wolf
and wolf is world.

26 March 2009

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But it wasn't said and it wasn't waiting
there was a glimmer in the trees she saw
hurried among them the stream
(our little stream) was there and she
became an affluent of it by sheer
attention poured her meek reflection on
and then it was Friday, the little fish
scared of their own shadows underneath
so shallow was the flow this time of year
so pale the pebbles under them so that
her myriad anxieties (our little life)
flushed out of her and directly went
to interview the broad-minded sea
down where no one needs to follow but I do.

27 March 2009

the Assyrians smothered their beards with oil

but how could that help us make love
or even sense? sandstone carved with animals
birds and crawling things just like the dawn
in some book the purports to be our father
all my life I have chewed the wood of the Cross.

27 March 2009

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Dead certain she said
and kicked the chair over
now no one can sit with me
I will play cards only with the devil
that bright one who moves my hands.

27 March 2009

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Carefully the other one—
a kind of spirits
they dissolve their colors in
glad as foxes in a smelly earth.
no color without fragrance—

that's one problem with the world
can't have one sense without all the others
those that have no names yet
and those that are forgotten now
but once the Greek girls knew
hoisting blue hyacinths from the spring-wet earth
and knowing, just knowing.

27 March 2009

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Isn't there another one waiting for me?
I ordered it from Philadelphia, your few furs
and mittens stuffed in a wooden box, how rich
you were yesterday and will tomorrow
but today a poor victim of my fantasy—
squirrels all over everything, priests
looking for cemeteries, a cloud
blindsided by the sun, one on one
we elbow the marble tables in cafes
until the nineteenth century if past. Phew,
as the cartoons write it, the sound
of being oneself again, no mask, no mind.

27 March 2009

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Iron Eden. Blue river, brown river,
yellow river, white. Fronds
and forgets. Palm trash, road wrack,
swept away from the axial Tree.
Where she plucked axes
and made me eat. Eden was symmetry—
all the arts that aspire to such metry
mean Eden. But our arts move other.
East a little, mostly north, where there is no
measure but the increscent light.
No natural measure, so we can make.
No number counts it so we run it
through our fingers, no written
language so we play it by ear.
Once I was cuneiform, we all were too,
and then got born, wedged out
into music somehow with a sound
like a scream. Fox in the forest.
Leopard in the thicket under Sherab
Ling, purple blossoms, snow peaks,
schoolgirls in uniform led along by nuns.
Red clay highway crumbling. India.
Close now. Eden was up there,
down here the sweat of song.

27 March 2009