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Import the many things
and be at peace.

Lettuce leaf
puts to sleep.

Cloves come far
to soothe your teeth.

Your mind's a kite
you fly it high
in rain and wind
when torn to shreds
it thinks its best.

5 April 2009

A CLOSE CALL

we used to say
meaning an almost
of disaster.

At any minute
the light of the world
is about to turn red.
Then there will be
turning and turning
but not go straight.

Any minute
revises what happened,
historians are just
reporters who weren't there,
drunk in the bar
they missed the war,
reading Marx
they skipped the revolution,
now they scribble
guesses and hearsay,
pretended witness.

5 April 2009

OF ANGELS & ST. PAUL

An angel is a messenger and
what a messenger looks like
keeps changing.

Depends
on the message.

Hair. Wings. Sex.
Bright or ordinary. There
or suddenly here.

An angel
is God's afterthought, a quick
reminder to the system
that you are in the system
and the system cares.
Or notices at least.

2.

The sense an angel makes
takes all the other sense away.

3.

Paul wants us to break out of the system,
has his doubts about angels, those high folk
we fight with in heaven, maybe
even doubts about the one who runs the system.

But he answers his own doubt: No,
there is One. And then there is the system.

The One is simple. Break
out of the system and head for the one.

The one you somehow always are.

Here endeth the lesson.

5 April 2009

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Handwriting is a calm psychosis—
what would they make of a hand
making so many marks
they who have no need of signs
or even saying anything at all
since where they live everything is already said?

5 April 2009

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A cow is made of grass.

An Englishman is made of cow.

Grass is made of earth.

Earth is made of sky.

Sky makes itself

and lies down over the prairie

like an old man dreaming about cows.

5 April 2009

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And we can turn away thereafter
from a disaster,
footprint in our clay
of a bad star passing.

There are pigeons over it
and a girl drowning in a stream
among the feathery shadows
of a brazen afternoon

in too new a country
with no lovers handy
to save her or any one of us
from the grind of geology.

5 April 2009

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When the chants of ordinary
lift from the littlest
and love you

that's when the mirror begins
to shiver and let through
the brother sister in you

lost from eternity
until now
they come to find you.

6 April 2009

[Katharevousa]

The body is the vernacular of the soul
which has a lofty formal language of its own

you hear sometimes the wind lecturing in it
among the adolescent trees. Mostly though

it's your own slang all day long you feel.

6 April 2009

= = = = =

Wildness in the after
a hurt for you to have
and perch on like the lady
bareback in the circus
and no horse! All you!
You are everything
you bring to mind.

6 April 2009

SOIREE

There was a politician called a silencer
who kept your peace for you, a public man
with grease all around his nostrils to suggest
Pig at Trough Leaves Some for You.

There was a prince who called himself a king
a king himself an emperor, a man
who called himself a god, a god
who claimed you had no need of him.

In the tumult of that masked ball there was
a woman who just stood there, honest
Mrs. Something annoyed at all these dreams
— hardly any decent conversation left.

6 April 2009

THE POEM

Raptor revision and missionary absolution
then the cannibal poem puts its bra on, goes
out into jungle boomtowns and tries to behave.

It wants you to take it home. It pretends
the words you hear it speak are meant for you,
in a language that you share. But wouldn't dare
talk all by yourself. It's under your roof now,

lying on your bed and looking at you the way
somebody you can't offhand remember used to,
as if they knew everything about you, more
by far than you'll ever know. It talks.

You lie down beside it and try to go to sleep.

6 April 2009

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Through the rain
a brightness rises

scares me

the sky is dark the ground is pale
a mist comes in between

I have to do something about it
can't help it, that's my nature,

the eye is all anxiety
as Dante tells us

or any crow.

6 April 2009

= = = = =

The rain itself is almost invisible.
Maybe it isn't rain. Or isn't raining.
The candlestick next to the amaryllis,
winter's past, green already on the hill
but cold. I am imagining only
what I actually see. This is the disease
of being 'me.' Instead of just nothing
special happening anywhere
but we are. Something like that,
something almost clear. We are different
we don't belong here – or anywhere else,
my Sufis, that's the joyous pain of it,
we are east already, as dawn as it gets.
All my life it has taken me to turn
one letter upside down and make me we.

6 April 2009

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“a smile left in the air”

on a page all by itself—
that’s the whole story.

7 April 2009

= = = = =

Take good care
of what is only there.
A shapeshifter as he was
is always incident,
read about him all you like
but be kind to dust
the universal applicant,
signs his name on every form.

Things manage with each
other but in this family
the book outlives its tree,
blue skies over Hell after all
and a bell down here
where some of us go on

safe under the radar of morality
content with small decisions
marry me or bring home milk,

*You don't learn what a thing is
just by doing it—
Socrates doesn't even know he's dead.*

7 April 2009

R.K. *SON EPITAPHE*

Did I say everything there was to be said?

Do it again, and this time get it right.

7.IV.09

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Why have the stars come back
after the godless daytime?

Only in the deep woods you guess them
hinted by the rush of cars on rainy roads.

7.IV.09

= = = = =

Has it come round to know what its name is?

Has it accepted saying what it says?

How sad to be a book and the same words all the time—
any real book wants to be every book

and never end and tell all the truth and get over it.

7 April 2009

WISHING WELL

Well, sort of miracles
like throwing pennies in
a well the first thing I knew
about New Hampshire
where the mountains are
and one strange lake.
Only in *The Tempest*
it is said does Shakespeare
end so many lines with *a*,
the sweet consecutives of prose
enlivening his late verse—
that's what the wishing well
wished me, fame
and luminous grammar
and knocks at the door
at midday, her smile
and how to understand
the speech of crows – these
were what the mountains
taught me, granite a
living grey, snowcapped
is what the well reflected
shimmering above
all the shiny pennies

7 April 2009