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I have never done enough
I have never loved enough
or helped enough

I have never said enough, never
told what I was really thinking
I am not kind enough

I am a number between zero and ten
nobody knows me.

16 April 2009

FRANCIS

A crucifix came down from the sky
and pressed its bronze agony
against the living man.

Coincidence of opposites.

A writhing moment. Atonement.

16 April 2009

FIVE A.M. SICKBED

I'm sorry, poetry has to be beautiful.

I'm sorry, if poetry doesn't show us what is beautiful
who will, and what will we do?

If beauty is not a product or commodity at all
or something that smiles at you now but frowns
six years from now and blames you for her life,
if beauty is instead a sudden discovery
of the world's breath breathing,
a sudden revelation of what is just as it is
and somehow our feelings rise to the moment and exult,
if beauty is some or all of this,
it is the poem that has to show the way,
show how the look of beauty sounds
the tumult of beast noises in us suddenly clear
fierce, stilled into speech.

16 April 2009

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Can write but not read

coherence

is a waterfall

loud and beautiful

but no focus,

no focus.

17.IV.09

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Tulips out, I sit
regarding them, sick,
me not them, they
are triumphant

for a while. Like daff-
odils or squills
so blue on the hillside.
Beside me snowshoes

not yet put away.
Hill I say but it is little,
all a matter of lift,
slope, scale, not size.

The fallen locust
lies along the crest
tree, not insect.
They are intact

unseen, heard
at the back of hearing.
Am I just a part
of what I see?

17 April 2009

TESTAMENT

Some day they
will all be full
these chalices.

Soma.

So many things I want to tell you,
my inheritors. So much to say.
Everything helps you – that
is the first lesson.

The helpful animals
in fairy tales, ants, bees,
they all are true and actual,

every perception is your servant,
every object in the world
means your mind.

That's why I'll never stop talking
until It takes me away
from the great circle of the word
and leave all my languages
safe in your mouths

to speak in your moment.
Momentum. To keep me being.

And in this place
quantity can turn into quality
the size of a thing
will be the meat that feeds,

leviathan. Be long
and short and swift and in between
but be long.
Stay long at what you do
until it does you.

Who is this It I keep dreaming?
Will she come in her red dress
and beckon me dance her
in the pinewood, vanish living
into the wordless beauty of the actual

I leave for you to speak?

17 April 2009

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Could we come close to a gesture
or as a gesture even, overcoming
the blue arch and the yellow line

and not be prairie any more?

We would have a box to keep
rivers in, a nice old sofa

all your dead can sit on it at once
smiling at you, their legs lined up
together. I want to know.

Is anything worth remembering?

I want to be sure when I take
off your shirt button by button

carefully I won't find instead
Yosemite valley deep in there
and an owl shrieking.

The hands of the clock
have razor edges, they slice
through my life, help, help,

but the book says He who
would save his life must lose it
one-syllable words scare us

are meant to. As if between
each word and every other
when the breath's momentum stops

a gulf opens. Look down there,
it is your naked chest at last
ordinary, beautiful.

I have to plunge between words
to find you, there is an agent
of the thresholds who interferes

in all the betweens of things.
This monster has three mouth
each speaks a different word

every word is simple that it says
but all of them together almost kill.
Hearing chaos right is how to live.

17 April 2009

THE MOUNDS UNKNOWN

You know this is Wyoming, it leaps
to the eye. And this is the grasslands
of Chicago, old wheat in mummy tombs,
red star on Macy's old delivery vans
in the era before UPS. Geology
is the last mystery of America: *I
myself am Time and all things in me.*

We have not found our Cheops yet,
our Pyramids slumber undetected
let alone excavated.

That must come.

Not just Ohio. Rochester. Bovina.
The enigmatic depths beneath Cumora.

And safe beneath the so-called hills
are houses meant for us, veteran cities,
immigrant realities: *they* brought us here,
summoned us to open them up
and breathe our life with theirs.

For them

we came here and for them we hunger still,
itching to dig. I tell you, under these
nearby animal shapes are mystic cities.
I can't help believing what I see,

the fairy light coming out of them
even at high noon down the road
from Andes on the way to Margaretville,
look to your right. Help me dig.
I mean Help me. Dig.

17 April 2009

BWANA

Old movies: white fool
in dark place. Soothes him
to feel obeyed. Disobedience
is the language of hell.
Master of no one, hence
not of himself. And vice versa.
Hence and hence. The law
waits for those who await
approval, asking the lions
for their blonde smile.
The law has teeth,

18 April 2009

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Why can't I ask for help?

Or do I do it all the time?

18.IV.09

CARDIOLOGY

Insert into living heart
three drops of
whatever naturally comes in threes.

The threeness will interweave
with the fourness of the heart's chambers

creating dances you can actually
dance to, with your ear
pressed to your partner's chest

the three and the four do a seven thing
and before you know it
you're in heaven heaven heaven—

this works only on a human heart.

18 April 2009

IT HAPPENED

But of course it was far away
like the exploding rose of red and sulfur yellow lights
expanding in the night
far above the little Italian man
crouched by his tube who made it happen.

Of course it relates to the sky
as a bird does, one more episode
in heaven's long history
hardly noticed by the busy saints.

Of course it fell out of the deck
like the fifth Ace long ago,
the Ace of Time whose symbol
was a broken mirror

or in other decks a drowned man naked on the shore.

18 April 2009

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I wonder if this is answer enough
you didn't call I didn't write
I wrote you didn't answer you called
I sat and watched the telephone
it looked like a ship sinking—
enemy cruiser flaunting its evil flag.

18 April 2009

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Men who wear their brains outside their skulls
and men who wear their souls outside their skin
and all such monsters of affection come
sacrifice the distance to a whim of touch

and white skirts on women at the taffrail
why isn't there more to the touch when you touch?

18 April 2009

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Drop everything and run into the brain.
Wait there, she'll be there any minute,
the other mother, the unremembered,
the deeply known. Now. Right now.

19 April 2009

A PICTURE

One silence
broken by a hundred silences.

19.IV.09

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To live in the names of England
is having a dream
and holding it round you all day long.

19.IV.09