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After time it stops to need.

The magic notebook

falls from the detective's pocket

quickly we learn who did each deed

but never why. *Hier gibt's kein Warum*

which Levi heard in Auschwitz

we hear in every science lab,

there is no why, no sky, no sense

below the senses – why should there be?

Why do we need *why* when we have *this*?

People move slowly away from one another

forever. So do stars. One is sad,

one gives material for thinking.

A smart lady would say they're both the same.

5 July 2009

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How broad that glass of water is
a lake along the eye-line close held
as if the mind of the beholder
were its meniscus, its uplift
from true horizon, the bend of desire
lifting things to me – this country
that includes all of you. The lake
is dangerous, full of sudden marriages
and blueberry divorce. Marry
the telephone and— stop right there.
Language is scary enough without
complete sentences. When I can go
swimming in the look of someone
then it's time for me to put on my face.

5 July 2009

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Don't worry about it.

Eventually every

moon will be full.

Take off your shirt

and let me see your calendar.

We were made

for a better world but here we are.

5 July 2009

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Just don't understand me.

Or if you do, then do it by touch

imagining me to be somebody else.

My apples fall very far from their tree.

5 July 2009

IN ARCADIA

We meet the gauze green day
where hummingbirds dive-bomb tigers
and nectar oozes out of umber flowers
to cure all diseases that have names

and new colors walk out on our skins
testing this environmental music—
too many strings, not enough horns,
the flock shifts downhill to graze—

a moving sheep is not a happy sheep
he said, we stand where we are and eat,
a wolf is an afterthought of God
it's not for us to understand

but the hummingbirds revealed
by the hieroglyphics of their meeting dance
the purpose all this means to serve:
an Egyptian wall pronounced in Greek

truth is what won't let us forget.

6 July 2009

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I confess to using common words—
no word is short enough for me these days,
out of pebbles build some edifice
that swoozes you, sweeps you in,
makes you for the moment mine.

6 July 2009

MEASURE

It's the measure that decides
if I'm still talking to you or not,
maybe this is an entirely different
conversation (*sermo* in Latin,
as in Horace) syntactically coupled
but an unfamiliar face in the mirror
that language is—mothers,
do you know who's talking to you now
let alone your yummy children
wandering around the weird words
where it is always nighttime?
Sunrise of the poem comes, heals,
tells them to go home and home
is everywhere. I've given up myself
on abstract words, except pronouns,
I can't live without you, let alone me—
we're the little ergs that keep the measure
rolling, otherwise the clock would run
sideways and the organ would explode
(nice to think about the sound that would make
but even so) and erg is not the right word
I didn't stop to look for but at least it's short
and that's what I'm after these days, curt

problematic utterances, like Freemasons on fire.
So my calligraphy has moved by night
to a different part of your anatomy, exuberance
of the linden trees these days, the perfume of it
in sunshine now its breasts full of bees.

7 July 2009

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Things go away.

Sometimes I'm with them
sometimes they're gone.

Variations everywhere
built around no theme—
the edge is hard to find

it is a miracle at all
to hear a single answer
a tongue in my ear.

7 July 2009

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I might be willing to arab it
or coat the somber wall with blue
tile like the teacup of the sky
but there are animals in me
needing to be fed, lawless
sympathies in love with woman.
The futile anger of their world
comes from being all men all the time.

7 July 2009

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Three turkeys on the lawn

two hummingbirds

Ile burn my books

God pulls me towards the world

that's why we think God made it

God thinks a better thing than that though

a lovely wake-up call inside me

and suddenly I'm outside!

But the birds seem to be gone.

7 July 2009

LA VIE EN PROSE

When you've eaten as much as you want
of the nice egg salad sandwich let the rest of it
fall from your fingers to the ground, free. Grass.
Someone will want it. Lovers like to look
at one another's hands and praise
beauty or strength or length or sturdiness
no matter where they've been. You live
in a country where things have always been
exactly like they are right now. Entitled
to most of what you want, bitter tears
soon dried about all the rest. Things break—
that's how we know they're things.
The rest of us go on forever, cynical,
cute, dressed as we should be for events
we maybe shouldn't be enjoying
but here we are. And I will have another.

7 July 2009

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Different colors for the day
—a flag's a flower and vice versa—
a dog of no neighbor
—the wolves that used to here are gone—
few, in the tumult of their manyness
things are few that hold to us,
cling of fruit on this lone tree, me—
when all we are is orchard
by the marsh of named things
smug silent for once—hence
that famous, wordless, smile.

8 July 2009

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I think it is/was laziness alone
kept me from typing up this letter
already mostly written here and there.
On a grey day a blue jay looks grey—
half of my correspondents are deceased
and some of those have never even
answered once. Or so I think.
My second letter to them might well be
their answer to my first, that is,
every letter is a love letter as once
upon a Latin time the Church calls
every novel *fabula amatoria*, ‘love story’
and all of them they mention they condemn.
Balzac. Flaubert. Stendhal. Zola.
It is a sin perhaps to read this very book—
moralische Selbstverstümmelung like
listening to the BBC, ‘moral self-
mutilation’ was a crime in Germany.
the penalty imprisonment or death
to let the ruin of the body catch up
with the mutilated soul. Maybe if I
sent a letter to Socrates the police
would be at my door next day—
criminal conversation with the dead.
There are too many ways of answering.

Every word's a tattoo on somebody's skin
— go macro them and catch the ink close up
before it has a chance to play its sinister
blue performance on someone's arm or back
saying some picture forever and ever
or some word not even a kiss can hear.
Wait, there's still lots of me left.
But not much right—I fall for cheap tricks
every time, every one in the book.
What book? The one that needs me
to write it, no purple words this time,
the king is a rascal and sleeps all alone
and Rumplestiltskin grows his own hair long
climbs his own tower, disappears
into the dubious heaven of mythology
that half-remembered place, that foreign radio.

8 July 2009

End of NB 315

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What caught on the air
and swayed there a moment
before it relented
and gravity was

was too small for a feather
or a winged seed
of some tree I knew
so all it was was something seen

clean in soft rainlight then gone.

9 July 2009

RIDDLES

Pondering judgment rage
or rail depending
on the acuity of my vocabulary
who am I?

Or thundering
self-incrimination flee
across your borders
disregarding them. Now who?
Measuring turf around your words
I settle and I claim.
Am I easier to name
now? And I remain.

9 July 2009

ARS POETICA

Why does it have to be small?
So we can see between the lines
to where the silent thicket
shelters every soul we need.

9 July 2009

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Speaking seldom
in my own person
but I have only a few
personas to attend,
the ones that think they're me
and buffalo their way through
my conversations
and your days, citizens,
lovers, friends. My habits
lecture and I am mute.

10 July 2009

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Bird sounds. Inner

dschungl of the ear.

Griefhard cardplayers.

One looks up.

The moon too is a survivor.

11 July 2009