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Open the little Socrates
and take a special oil
there are three in there
so get the right one out
and rub it in, spread
it on your book then read
with your fingers your
elsewhere eyes.

11 July 2009

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Wondering how much of it is real
the spaces between the letters of the word
the the the
the newspaper

but space is where the news comes from
new news
the never spoken

wonder of a blue fur
sort of space around the eyes
the sky.

11 July 2009

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Seeds sifting on me
from overhead—
trees as if this land too
were underground and they
mat the green surface of the real world
beneath which some sort of permission's
needed to be here. To know
among all the silences.
See, it is all about wanting to touch you
always. And after the touch,
what then? The years of dread,
forgiveness, then forget?

11 July 2009

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I am too nervous to be me.
Some other road is needed,
otherself boulevard gleaming
round the temple where the knights
are said to worship *their own bodies*
and use curious machines of latex and steel
to pray their muscles on. Chains
everywhere hang down. Easy after.
Sunrise in a can. Open me,
I am your leather. Walk
from building to building as if it all
knew how to connect. A play
with singing, but no music in it.
An acrobat lives with his mother.
A girl discovered in a garden. Now
is the only time there ever is
or I am none. So stop saying.
I'm just letting words say themselves.
Yes, but it's only words you know.
Incarnadine. Meniscus. Artful.
Hendiadys. Satchel. Laburnum.
There are no others left to think.

11 July 2009

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Peeled from under sleep's eyelid

Aphrodite Philommeides

(mēdea five times in the Odyssey meaning male genitals)

cast adrift on the same sea

the sea she is

Odin-Zeus made so much of

fondling his Nausicaa—how else

could you come ashore

but to the arms of someone *there*, an ardent

patient on the strand.

No Crusoe. *A man*

who comes home to his wife

whoever she is

wherever he finds her.

Language also is an island

tiny in the immense ocean of knowing nothing.

11 July 2009

ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗ

Summer interlude

not do much

watch

the weather

metarsiaspexis

I will be Greek today

eat my yogurt and petition Aphrodite

for one more rhapsody

on all the Mondays maybe

then back to work

on her husband's day

as the stolid say

but we are all her husbands

every man jill of us

though she be no man's wife,

o Love if ever you heard me

and more than once crept

sly into the hearts of those I loved

and made them love me,

let them turn again

their ears and arms towards me

safe in your glance, ready to hear.

12 July 2009

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Having said his prayers
he turns to counting the leaves.
Bruckner no different from Hesiod
turning every stupid little thing into praise.

12 July 2009

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Breeze

shakes the *Times*

blows the news away

leaves only the new,

sun on linden leaves.

12 July 2009

THE SMELTERS

devourers of difference alloyers
makers of one out of many
imperialists pocket Lincolns
pluribus men, extractors
of fake essences, tribades of union,
lickers-up of spilt spirit,
fathers of smoke –

o Alchemist

we put you always in our hells
where you are comfortable,
shifting the groundwork of matter
god-matter, making the mute
mutter at last, turning the blueprint red.

You left lesbian lesions
on this man's brain,
a structure parallel to the flower
laughter in the woods early morning
an empty street happy with sunshine
why was I born one of you
a whisker to tune in the radio
a crystal set, a father's
fingers delicate assembled
twirling the *cat's whisker*

to tune, when to tune meant hear
when there was nothing before
fathers teach their sons and sons
learn what their fathers didn't know
I am what you did not tell me
or is that more pretension puffing
down the bamboo tube that helps the flame
makes a man think
he found out something for himself
when it was all there from the beginning.

All we ever learn is skin. Our skin
if we're lucky someone else's
too. Everything else is technical,
find it in a handbook, write the manual,
rub the sticks together till they talk:
this was my president. Or my sky
is made of blue silk-satin, *my*
church is made of reeds
and the wind bleating through them
by the pond at nightfall my gospel.

They will tell you anything, men,
just to keep you talking—
a pretty girl like you talks with her ears—
those triflers, mendicants of used desires,
they build their ferryboat in the desert

and wait for rivers to find them, poets
do this, peddlers with nothing in their sack,
clouds on their back, look, love,
I will sell you the sky.

13 July 2009

CANTINFLAS

Cantinflas, remember him,
the old Mexican comedian
who screwed up his face
with pain and everybody laughed?
Remember Toto (Italian comedian
not Kansas dog) whose sad
bland bewildered sensuality
made you laugh at yourself
for wanting so much more
than this sorry character had
to settle for? Remember
Fernandel, played a priest
like a wise donkey, made
you understand a priest's
business was to recommit you
to laymen's pleasures,
lovers, thieves, Commies
and worse, anything to give
God a good laugh? No wonder
you don't go to the movies
now that comedians talk
and are as fatuous as tragedy
and make no more sense than I do
murmuring to myself at home.

13 July 2009

A BIRTHDAY CARD FOR MR. G.Q.

I want to write a gossip column about your stones
– what a stone is like at home
Naked close-ups of all the wars they've been
fire and water and wind and neglect

until St. Levity raised them from their beds
and made them strut. Surface, not volume!
Touch, not hold! Be seen, be stood!
And certainly not understood.

Until you come close to a house
you can't see the bricks. Or later lick
the sleek walls of what seemed so separate.

Things dissolve at our glance. Things love
to see us coming close to them, touching,

guessing, recalling, even knowing. Things
want us to think about them all the time.

14 July 2009

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Poets write as if they knew the truth—
they don't even know what they know
until the writing says it for them.
And even then the poet thinks: this is true
and wonderful but I meant a different thing.
A thing now no one will ever know.

14 July 2009

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What say you, friend,
are you my mend?
My mind I mean,
where all-heal grows
beside the toadstool,
beneath the rose,
the one I mean or
the one you meant
growing slantwise
through rock crevices
to cherish even me?

Instructed that sleep
heals all diseases
but dream, and morning
finishes the cure,
I grew to doubt daylight
and why do I hunger
for the nurse's touch
the delicate pulse
detected at last?

14 July 2009

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But if I read a different book
't will have be from other pages
full of other words, those sparrows
who are never still, grass or sidewalk
all the same to them, as if each bore
a private sky inside. I am afraid
of other words, the insolent
agendas of them, the sly tones
of their voices as they choose me
to say them out loud. What might they
make me say? I pull my shirt
up to cover my face. Now
I am alone with my breath.

14 July 2009

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Souls of the dead in bardo-land
remember being in bodies: Whose?
Isn't a body a strange thing to be in!
And land is not the word for where we are.
A habit in freefall, lost between names.

14 July 2009

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and broke the shell by War
an animal uprisen talks
itself out of the circle
and falls back
as words do between the thighs of thinking
and the body smells of where it's been
the false ideas it let make love to it

be clean, darling, as only blood can be,
purified in the longest journey
through the blue tunnels the 'purple island'
sometimes light near the skin but dim
mostly dark and buried in the meat
of any me and thee, we
are the insects of it the eternal burrowing
through ourselves we can't get too deep in
we want we want we burr we press
and sometimes little drops of us squeeze out
hot for another sky—silvery
stained with our need.

[Sherry Williams 13 April 2009 Picasa]

13 / 14 July 2009

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Leave or linger.

Migrations of the peoples. Thee or me.

Nothing obvious, just the plain.

Puszta Savanna Steppe Grasslands Prairie

the plain of now.

But then: a hilltop

in Turkey, plenty

people come wherever people have been

until the peopleness of the land there

is used up. Then sun on broken stones.

We are the rubble of what happened.

Tribes of us keep pouring in

until the earth in this place

has had its say through us

then we're moved on.

Thousands of years.

This happens.

No one seems to notice, supposes

other things are going on.

But only this is.

We and what we do
are the words it means to speak.
Then we are free to go.
The stones we messed with
go back to the quiet thinking
we call sleep.

15 July 2009

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You don't give me enough
so I take even less

the wind burrows inside everything—
why can't we be the wind
investigate one another

why do the pretty flags
droop slack from the halyards?

15 July 2009

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As if a word not,
left shoved
in the bark of a pine tree
like a crow feather
offered to holiness wherever
in the whole of it of us it is
something unspoken
stuck deep in what we think.

15 July 2009