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We don't boast

of our benefactions, hire
others to do it for us instead
just as we employ enemies ('friends')
to use up our bad karma
by vexing us.

Betraying us.

Turning from us when all
we wanted was one afternoon,
autumn leaf and empathy.

12 October 2009

AN EMPTY PAGE

And where is the image here,
hobo? Where is the steaming kettle,
the tin pot caravan, the waterfall
where once saw the king's daughter
sporting with her maids-in-waiting?
No image left, no shadows
of aspen leaves quivering on the pond.

12 October 2009

WALKING THE DOOR

Make it all happen again.

Be one.

Or again
the sweet another
of so many fountains,
they nestle on their perches over
the mild chemistry of afternoon.

Memoir,
translated from
the gulp of puberty
into the adult anon,
where phosphates bake along the Altiplano
and only the sky
that old inquisitor
with such a deep blue voice
gets to see. Me.

I need a sentence
to lead me ,
I mean read me
to where I am,
I read a sentence once
and the book
would not let me go,

so now I find
I am what it must have had in mind
(do writers think?)
when it began
to breathe and wheeze and whistle
the way they do,
words, sayings, tales,
today is a day
to walk the door
until we find
a better house than that,
open each other and go in.
Not a word of geeting.
Nobody home.
The peace
of furniture
welcomes us.
Soft noise of wood and cloth and cusion,
my door stands in their strange doorway
and keeps watch.
I sleep
in otherness—
this was what childhood meant
all along,
the unity of safe and scared.
I think I'm finally ready for someone to come home.

12 October 2009

THE TASK

I don't want to do this job

I've got work to do—
sanitize the obvious
so it makes you will again
to want the things of this world.

I am a doctor of base matter,
its leperly malfeasance I correct
and spin out fine payments
to the end of gold.

We all are metal here. We matter.
The princes of the air corrode us, true,
but we inhabit their ascendant breath
so that they carry—me for instance—
everywhere you (for instance) are
and there set down
our new policy of luminous neglect—
you grow wise by dream
and dull by waking.

Sleep, lady, I am the cadmium
of your reddest sleep,
all matter's in the world just for you,
I am the least of it,
silver gleet, the priest.

12 October 2009

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The old imperial design: the sign.
People bothering the house next door
with saws. Or over-next, no less
immediate, the noise. Sunshine
is a noisy thing round here. Sounds
as if they hate to be awake—
they shoot the light.

12 October 2009

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Have you ever been old
have you ever seen the cordillera de los Andes
crumble in front of your eyes to flashes of brown light and black light
against a page with no language ever
have you ever followed your left foot as carefully as you can
with your right foot and still stumbled,
ever climbed the staircase and never reached the top,
have you ever stopped in the middle of the woods
and said to the trees You are the only ones who know me
Why did I come this way Why am I here?

12 October 2009

[dreamt: the end of a long paragraph that woke me with its beauty, or I was awakened by a loud sound that seemed to strike the house around 5:15 in the morning of 13 October 2009 in time to catch the end of the paragraph that was dreaming its way:]

“...became his single quest: to find the poor soldier with one eye and one leg, find him because he is the servant, find him and serve him, because to serve the servant is to find the world.”

13 October 2009

= = = = =

If it were a word it would speak
but since it is made of wood
and still alive it has to do what?
What is the accusative of being?

We are too small to see a tree
for what it is. If our eyes
were where our insight lives
we would see each tree as punctuation

of an immense almost legible text
it must become our business
to learn how to read.
But we have no business now.

We are fish in a shallow pond
and for all the variety of our colors
passing cameras can't focus on us,
we are bright blurs to the divine eye.

We are the wrong size. In the wrong place.
What is the object of the verb to be?

13 October 2009

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Don't think about it.

Write it down.

It is a stone.

Now stand on it

and look over the fucking wall.

13 October 2009

= = = = =

Just open your eyes
enough to see it's dawn
then back inside her

where the night still has roses on
its weird branches with no thorns.

13 October 2009

THE ANGEL

If I were any closer
I'd be you
the angel said.

Be me
I answered, I am tired
of being so far away.

13 October 2009

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Put it in your lunch box
you carry to school.
Then take it out and read it
secretly, or if there is
no secret place in your day
then eat it,
 disguise it as an orange
or a tangerine you divide
neatly into segments while your heart breaks.

13 October 2009

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Did you ever wake up in the dark
at the sound of a strange noise
then wake up hours later in daylight
and found your house gone?
And you're lying in a Russian forest
in early May, still snow on shady places,
sun in your face, at eye level
you see little bright red mushrooms
and you have no idea what will come
out of your mouth if you try to speak?
This is what just happened to me.
And this is what it turned out I said.

13 October 2009

Angels advise:

Keep your eyes closed
until you have to speak.

13.X.09

CHURCH

The deep cool burgundy tiles on the wall of the men's room in the Nostrand movie theater on Nostrand Avenue in 1943 made a religious place for me I understood, a shrine that consecrated for me ever after the gestures of the bathroom as extensions of, continuations of, sacred acts. Every place is a temple, every patch of green a sacred grove. That's all I knew about religion, really, how it felt, how it felt to be in a place and the place spoke. Later, all those names and theories just to explain the color of those smooth cool walls.

13 October 2009

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I can't be anything.

I can't even be this.

13.X.09

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As long as something
weighs more than something else
I won't be free.

13.X.09

FRUIT-FLIES

They come from everywhere
thinking this is here.
An instinct isn't the same
as a mind, is it?

2.

The lure is honey and vinegar—
between the sweetness and the ferment
is their own lost paradise.
Something for us here too.

3.

All we need is what we want—
this is Freudian of us
only if we can almost get it.
But we still don't get it.

4.

They're like a trudging ox
carrying the Talmud on its back,
but nimbler than any book
for a little while.

13 October 2009

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A yellow bird
sails big across the lawn—
only in early autumn
could I get away with this.

13 October 2009