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Dipping flight of woodpecker
danger to the house wall
what strange life inside our house
attracts his scarlet appetite?

Or is it me my own aggression
summons this unlikely assistant
from the audience of air? Magic
is always dangerous when it works

and often even now at the dim hour
when hocus is asleep and the pocus fails.

9 November 2009

= = = = =

Birds so active now.

One idea one poem

if even that

agitates the birds.

9.XI.09

= = = = =

To be contradictory no compliment

write swift read slow

how else could it be given

the intricate obvious from on high?

9.XI.09

= = = = =

I gave them my best wheat
but some were allergic to yeast
or gluten or me. Some ate their bread
and went their way, some stayed with me.
This is the mystery of wheat.

9 November 2009

TRACTATUS DE VOLUNTATE

Things waiting
as if a human scowl
could turn off the moon
or this poor glass of water
make the whole world drunk—

needs only will
a glance a gaze close eyes
and take inside
then everything changes
all the bells start ringing
and there really is no mind.

*

Do you tell me
there is no mind
only images
only the dance of images received?

*

I don't know what I know
fodder for an old horse

restless in his stall or
tethered to a locust tree—
lightning comes, excitement kills—
and yet he *knows*.

*

All the unspoken desperation
presses out in words I do not mean
but mean themselves and make
an arbitrary absolute—
in their will my will sleeps.

*

I have theory for everything
theory of maple leaves blowing in the wind.

*

Theory implies will
because looking implies
someone using seeing
to think with.

Then thinking leaches out
and rearranges what we see,
the evidence that never is.

*

Maybe yes and maybe no
an owl perched outside your window
keeps perfect silence—
you can't even hear him ruffle his feathers.
And so you dream.

*

Permission is everywhere—
a boat through the breakers
desperately comes home.

10 November 2009

CONTRA CATULUM

Are they given to us for a reason?

Who? The child the cat the wounded bird.

Who is the broker of such compassions,

who decides to trust another's fate

to someone who will not accept her own?

What kind of mother will she be who burns her book?

10 November 2009

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But that's the opposite of what love means
love 'that moves the sun and other stars.'
Yes, but only will can make them all stand still.

10.XI.09

= = = = =

Will the one thing you know you *must* do
and all will be well.

What else could I say,
hearing the baby cry, the husband fumbling at the gate?

10 November 2009

THINKING

towards

what would *be* thinking

if I got there—

beginning is the great humility—

what *is* the wonder

inside wondering?

*

All doubt is tool

and must be kept sharp and clean

and must be put

back in the chest at the end of the day.

*

Measure? But the idea

is not a thought, it is the light

shaped by an Other, a light

by which we presume to think.

And actually do think

until we pass out of the zone of light

into the silence of the actual.

Then thinking thinks.

*

The Other may be actual

or transactual.

It may be a name

long ago gone to sleep.

Or a name recollected in a dream.

But a name is enough.

11 November 2009

MIND COMES WITHOUT TELLING

for G.Q.

Don't blame me
if you give me a cup

and it's full and I drink it
I drink what is given

if I don't like it and pour it out
whatever it is and fill it

with something I think I like
better whatever it is

it is still the cup you gave me
still your cup

and you shape what I drink from it
and how I am shaped by the drinking.

Utensils you know they don't stay in the hand
the shape of the vessel pervades the drink

didn't I just write that in Rilke
didn't your cup tell me to write it?

2.

I think what I'm after

here is the mind—

is the mind more like the cup

or like what someone fills the cup with

and you drink it then I drink it

and this drinking is called thinking

is that how it goes?

What an old song I can almost hear it.

3.

In any case it's thinking,

this business of cup and content,

giver and drinker, the trees

these days are full of mysteries—

light thinking its way towards us

through skeletal designs—

like the grisaille on the backside

of the Ghent altarpiece that used to give us

(a cup full to overflowing, blood of the lamb)

so much to worry about in the old days,

thinking, the days before the mind

when the colors sang all morning long

and the monochrome panels

taught us to sleep grammatical and pure.

4.

But we don't know much about mornings,

do we? For owls, morning is like Camelot,

a fine fable we hear about later

like naked Dawn some men claim to have seen

and I myself (this is boasting now)

woke abruptly this very morning

and tottered past my window and saw

something out there that may be why

such sober myths arise,

a paleness happening past eastern trees

thereby made visible as if without
a single color walking towards me

each distinct in all that wooden liturgy
and I hurried back to hide in sleep.

5.

But if any of that were true
all this coming and going

logic requires there be some place
to which we've come or from

which we are free to go
and we know that just isn't so,

there is no place at all
except as those skinny Sufis say

there is only place, *maqom*
fountain of compassion

the merciful.

Do we trust logic though?

Isn't coming an absolute arrival
from which all things go except the one,

and going, what is that anyhow but coming
to yourself again when you're free of wherever

and wherever is full of relatives
whining infants dogs depend on you for love

an emotion not natural to animals
or us. We must have picked it up someplace.

11 November 2009

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When the Wrong Thing comes
we must have lived in such a way
as now to make it right.

12.XI.09

