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Don't deserve Christmas,
holiday, time off, presents.
Wasn't naughty wasn't nice.
Endured. Enduring's its own
reward and he who endures
belongs to everybody. Says
that on my label. Or nobody.
Pick me up and need me.
I am nothing. I am yours.

25 December 2009

EVANGELIST

Sense of waiting.

Song

carved out of synagogue.

Where they *come together*

and become it.

Gamelan.

Consort. It seems

no one makes music.

Only some. And then

the rock from which a wall

is made consents.

2.

Marriage is a trade

like any other, working

hard for a most select

clientele. The rest

can make music

for themselves.

You two make sense.

3.

The desert

has nothing to teach us.

Wander your forty

nights or forty acres
but do not listen
to what space recites,
it tells every traveler
the same story
and one by one they
write it down each
in their own silly
languages, but trust
the desert as you would
a lover's promises.

4.

Don't. Be one
who comes back
from the wilderness
with nothing to say,

down from the mountain
empty-handed,
no laws to vex us with,
step lightly
your mind far away,
your silence
our final gospel.

25 December 2009

= = = = =

There is a quiet space in mind though
grassy and moist but sun too is frequent there
and sky-blue forget-me-nots grow low.

If there are walls around this garden
I haven't seen them yet. No wall
can capture someone who stares at the ground.

25 December 2009

AMBER

Caution

like a cucumber

chunk in salad

cold and thick.

Warm it with a kiss.

The light changes,

the whole town is waiting.

25 December 2009

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My hand just reached for a cigarette
I lit twenty-five years ago
and stubbed out, the last one ever,
ten minutes later.

Sometimes I wonder
whether numbers mean anything at all.

25 December 2009

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When the mind catches up with the itself
it's like a merry-go-round
reaching the finish line. Exhausted horses.
Dragon chariot empty. The lion hungry no more.

25 December 2009

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My grand-daughter the earth
once taught me: Be quiet
first father, and let the stories
be like bones, and the ear of corn
your sweet gospel.

Wise
are these maidens who float
chaste through time, and she
especially, meat of my mind,
takes care of her old man
and lets me seem to rest
watching what seems blue sky,
clear forms of crows, cavorting.

26 December 2009

= = = = =

The cleansing place—
immensity, as Ungaretti said,
shows me the way.

26.XII.09

QUIET INTERSECTIONS

His heart stripped bare
by the branches he plunged through
to find a nameless place.

But there are no more of those,
everything is precinct now or sacred grove,
no more miscellaneous, no more void.

Satan did tempt us, and we built.
Now the heart's the only naked place
but even there his memory keeps

humming old time Baptist hymns—
the earth has heard them all before
and sings along with him, word for word.

26 December 2009

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People who have names
for a long time have other
things beside names.
You tell me what they have:
fox fur collars, beehive
hairdos, Ferraris, atriums,
hypocausts, pyramids,
dirty fingernails, smiles.
Then they just have names.
And then they just are names.

26 December 2009

IN THAT COUNTRY

cactuses are trained to grow like letters
spelling words across the desert.

COME HOME, I FORGIVE YOU. But who

would come home to that?

And who is even talking, and

what did the other one really do?

Botany is mysterious, like plumbing.

Or why anybody cares about anybody

in particular. And mystery: why

is anybody's body special? And how

do the saguaros happen to know?

26 December 2009

= = = = =

O god I hear you now
through the thicket of music
always arriving,
voice inside the voice—

and because of you
silence also has a tune
tears in my eyes
I also have to sing.

26 December 2009

= = = = =

It is as if the theater
is empty now.
And all that's left
is your body
shaped into my mind.
How can I forgive you
for putting it there?
The unforgivable gift
of knowing you—
can I unknow you now,
go back and hide
my awareness, be empty
as the theater is. an echo
maybe, but not for long?

26 December 2009

THE WAITER

And now to hear again
his melodious reckoning—
he stands beside us
reciting the prices of
all the food we refused
to order and did not eat.
And I'm afraid this sweet
shabby little fellow
is an angel though,
and each of our omissions
he writes down
in that little book
whose sins outweigh
our feeble passions.
The sorrow always
of having to choose.
Of not choosing.
I think he's crying
a little now,
or is it me?

26 December 2009

= = = = =

On a quick estimate
it is today. Bittersweet
blazes scarlet by the stream,
the mist makes it glow.
The only color in this world
and a mind yet to wake.
Already the mist is lifting,
drizzle ending. How beautiful
the world without me
to bother it by describing.
Or is it all like mist, gone
any minute and I'm the only
permanent? Horror story.
I defer identity.

27 December 2009

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Mist, or must? Which?

The whole world is one
thing or the other.

27.XII.09

= = = = =

Catch honor where it fell
the girl's ankles
indifferent to the ground.

27.XII.09

WEATHER

Had I gone out to meet it
it would not have been there—
it would have been just another part of me
a man walking by himself.

27 December 2009

= = = = =

I believe everything I read
I have to, because it's language—

shall the fish then doubt the sea?

But isn't there a time
when the salmon leaves the ocean

and searches out the high fresh waters
from which the sea comes

a pure flowing without salt
language without words

and rises in transformation?
Are we anadrome?

Is there a silence different from death?

27 December 2009