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Nine howler monkey day
the hap is a beastie's cry
a howl like broken sugarbeets
smashed on the highway'
in a beet farmers' strike—

the road red through it,
a slippery muck a going is
as if we shuffled through
the ruins of our own body's meat
the insides of a poor
broken man crying out in Irish

can you still do?

I can, a whimsful.

But a true?

Fine as can you,
a mouthful or a minute.
gar, I hate beets.

So be it. Collective
farms work better anyhow,
tractors and the like,
Pudovkin even turned against him too,
and Nikolai Cherkassov
whose voice sounded just like God.

These things the monkeys say
because only they
remember and embody history.
All the rest of us forget
but a monkey lives alone with what happens.

And we have none living in our state.

28 January 2008 / *9 ba'ts'*

= = = = =

Watching the light grow, and even the sun about to rise over the hill, then actually rising. How good it is to be on earth again.

28 1 08

LISTS

Lists are certainties.
Lists are epistemologies.
I never met a list I didn't like.

Didn't always want what was on them.
Like mayonnaise
or certain medical procedures.

Or some people I had to write letters to.
But a list is fine,
a thing mentioned on a list

is almost a thing already,
almost here, almost done.
The sun is almost up now, seen

between a maple sapling and an elm—
what more could a poem give you
than what a list does?

It asserts nothing, it just gives,
sun elm maple hill and January snow.
All telling and no argument.

All meat and no forgetting to come home.

28 January 2008

There is too much going on.

Makes me think I'm a verb
or a bird not a man.

Ah me, we said in the old
country, a man, what is he?

He is a bridge between forgetting
what has been and not knowing
what is to come,

this bridge sways beneath our feet.

The river gorge is deep
don't look over the edge, don't stare
down into the unfathomable now.

29 January 2008

LEARNING IRISH: ECLIPSIS

When the attack
changes. I approach you
not wearing my own face
but someone else's.

If I am B, I creep up on you
as M. Softly. But you
know me anyhow.
Your tongue is in my mouth

is how I speak at all.

29 January 2008

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My task
is a box

a tax too
in a bosky

year or place
right here

as if an angel
stumbled

and became
all that's around

us and that too
is to do.

Even for mountains
we have to breathe.

30 January 2008

= = = = =

Not always worrying what is to become of him
he became of himself, and stayed.

Long enough to light a cigarette and stub it out
preferring after all not the natural

but the thing on the other side of a man
when nature is firmly at his back

and suddenly he sees. Negation
is the silkiest sheen of it, the easiest

part of anything is to say no.
And then go. Forward,

into what is not yet there
until you are. And still

stub his toe against a flower. A red one.
And that's only the first mile.

30 January 2008

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Excelsior easy to say
around Beethoven or
under the El on Livonia
near Fortunoff's crates
unpacked spill china
and raffia all around
RONDO memory as
machine embedded in
the warzone of soft tissue
the brain the brain
(autism is a disease
of memory) (caution
is a disease of desire)
distemper, a gall on oak:
write down now this
thwarted passion
in an ink stilled from
your sick compulsions
sweet amber, eaglewood,
andante, andante.

30 January 2008
Olin

= = = = =

Some days you don't
want to think about
some friends. Or see his
picture on the table.

You turn it over. A date
on the back is no help,
some place name in a world
you wish you weren't in.

Where are you now
in your wanting to be?
A friend, even a good
friend, is of this earth.

Unforgivable proximity!
Neighborhood of silence,
suburb of Death. His face
breaks your heart.

21 January 2008

PSALM

The sun is my tree
I shall not fall
she dangles fruit
where I can reach

she makes the sky
not just a color
but a house herself
I meet her there

we are high together
many arms a million
fingers hold us to each
other and let go

it is a grand music
of yes and no
when I stretch out
she becomes my body

differenceless. Aloft.

31 January 2008

= = = = =

I have been slow at my work,
brother elves, I have let them play
with their old toys, drink
yesterday's milk and I have left
women to wear last year's shoes.

This is a sorrygram from santaland,
it is a weary January it's been,
all my effort spent on polishing
the old trash in my box of tricks,
old tunes set to nouveau chatter

and still I do it all for you (not you,
elves, you others, over there,
the listeners, listen) and still I care
and dare and all that stuff
and write it all down with you in mind.

31 January 2008