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There was a time when all I had to do
was make things up and think them all day long.
This is called childhood.

There was a time when all I had to do
is make things up and write them down.
This is called being a man.

A time will come when all I have to do
is believe the things that I wrote down.
This is what is called dying.

16 March 2008

PLACE KNOWS

Cancellation of a house
by gravity alone. East
Fifty-first street we put
too much place in a place

and it falls through. Crane
topples, house is crushed.
People die. Place
is beginning to fight back.

Real Estate did this. Kills.
Place knows how many
people there can be in place
before place runs out

and the horror starts to fall.

16 March 2008

= = = = =

The sly insertions, the preacher
bobbing at his flock
a bird too ominous—

the children sleep
safe in the elsewhere of their minds.

16 March 2008

= = = = =

Forgive me Lord for thinking
I know better than two
thousand years of churchmen
but I do. Palm Sunday maybe
and God is great when to think so
makes you take care of the world
and love everyone in it
and only then, Cold
for the season but no snow.

16 March 2008
West Roxbury

= = = = =

City dawns seldom spectacular
more a sigh of relief
that the fierce dark thing is gone

breathed out like a frightened
breath held in too long
and the sea light sweeps simple in.

17 March 2008
Boston

= = = = =

One little idea—
crack it
and get the nutmeat of nonsense out
and chew it
long and sweet.

Nonsense nourishes.
Nonsense leads away,
When you've gotten
as far away as there is
you might finally be here.

17 March 2008
Boston

= = = = =

Lift the wood and fuse it to the house.
Porches. Porticoes. Verandas
round my bungalow, steep woods
round Tiger Hill and then
every place I've ever been
becomes my only house.
And there I live beneath the mountain
right here between my ears.

17 March 2008
Boston

= = = = =

Every dawn is Mount Kanchenjunga
A pretty girl taking out the trash.

17 III 08, Boston

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Car alarm
mystery of neighborhoods
how we do and how we don't

sunshine in bare trees
though yesterday a pussy willow
beginning its primordial performance

making my fingertips a child again.

17 March 2008
Boston

= = = = =

Wolf child for real
we all are.

A mistake
makes me
at your door

suddenly it's complete
the house closes
on the trapped

Beware of noticing

* * *

Emblems instead of emotions
(emoticons as old as the Cross)

unfelt sincerities

quiet empty streets.

18 March 2008

= = = = =

The voice is spilled of its images.
The child cries at the door
that everything is. Everything
doesn't open anymore.

18 March 2008

= = = = =

Ester Astarte A star. True.

She had no king.
She is the twin of the sky.
Her real name is The Light.

18 March 2008
(to H.S.B., who asked)

PLAINT FOR THE FEAST OF SAINT JOSEPH 2008

I've never been a husband in that sense
stand around watch some baby grow
into a manhood he could share with me
pivoting on the same mysterious woman
no one would ever know except by her effect,

him again, the infant uttered into the world
as if he had some big news to declare.
So Joseph also is a mystery I stumble on
year after year at this season, *a day
before spring, a day after winter*
someone stands at the edge of the picture
fiddling with some wood. Everything
is ready to begin. Hide the nails.

Dear one, I am astonished at my
temerity. I want to be the one who has been
born. I want you to have been my father,
a father further than God.

19 March 2008

= = = = =

So silent in herself
like time itself he thought
suddenly there or suddenly gone
he thought what could be the matter
who were the pilgrims who dared to bring

this woman to this place in me
so that I could never forget
he asked always guessing at somebody
crouching inside time and driving forward
that bitter engine through the world

smiling even in her little cockpit
like a kid on a tricycle he thought
mowing down centuries of bleeding men.

Of when he was and would be one
he thought his only dignity being
to be and to be as silent as she.

19 March 2008

= = = = =

But Joseph. Again the spring.
As if he willed it
and we're grateful
for what he lets the animals do,

the ones we shear and milk and eat.
Because he was a carpenter
he built a door in the world
and let the sun through.

We get all giddy at that,
touch one another and say people's names
and love them, marry them, mourn them
when they leave the room, crying their names.

But the secret name of everybody else is Joseph.
He is the man in the picture
who nails the picture to the wall.
He holds time open so some strange Man sneaks through.

19 March 2008

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So the equinox, the feast
among Italians
is Joseph.

Southern ones

I grew up with,
everybody walking in the street
knew all about *The Golden Bough*
inside himself, parades, fertilities,
the green man, cauldrons, girls in satin.

And this silent man with whiskers
has brought the warm days back I thought.
Don't worry about time, seasons,
touch the satin, say the girl's name.

Welcome her into your wrought iron garden
and feed her those nourishing fried things
they call by some weird Sicilian name
but you call Spring is here.

Who really are you, Joseph?

19 March 2008

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But anyone was because of me aren't you?
I wanted the jawline clean as a harp
the lips were Egypt certainly the neck
is a pale name in English and I lick.

Confession time. I luck. The face
after all these centuries comes back
and sees me hard. The park the poem
the old days the Queens afternoons

imagine me. Again the luck of what
after all the all is you again at last
for the first time now. So long before.
Birth isn't everything time isn't

everything is it a beginning is never.
It always was. Is. That's the luck part
I lick you too understand the mouth
is the meaning of everything it says.

20 March 2008

(WINDOWS)

Time to measure time,
a crime. Time
to remember forgetting
and then forget it again,

the window. The one.
There is only always
one at the window.

You stand there
you let me see you

don't you understand
that it doesn't care
who stands before it?

Looking in or looking out,
showing oneself or only seeking
a self to know,

it doesn't matter
to the window, doesn't
matter even to the glass

itself, a glass
is not a window,
a hole in the wind

is a window
an eye that sees everything.
There is nowhere to hide.

I who married
so many doors
have been betrayed
by every single window.

(7 March 2008)
revised 20 March 2008

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It always seems close enough then it's gone,
the park in Queens you could listen to the roses grow
and why do pretty women always play the flute

who do lakes dry up and why does morning come?
A broken arrow lies on the shore, speedwell's
they say a flower. Catch up and fall down.
Watch the amaryllis blossom again and thank God.

20 March 2008

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When all the music plays at once
it's worth picking up the telephone.
In this furniture a wine is stored
inestimable auction value. What i
don't drink another will
o'er my dry bones. Bamboo
almost eternal in its little paddy,
a pond's thing men make to
keep the ocean in, piece by piece
the quantities. The woman
who keeps trying to let you go.
Let the sky fall into my sleep,
sleep on my back and gulp down
the sky and all its birds and trees,
the sky through branches is my sky.

20 March 2008

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Exactly enough to measure the coefficient of normality
by which the broken edges of Saint Somebody's reliquary
scratch the poor priest saying his dawn Mass and he
could be any one of us, girl or not the swift rebuttal,
the answer no one knew – raise your hand and leave the room
we are the partners of midnight and a cry

And then another thing a whistle with no tune a tune
with no words a word with no meaning a meaning
with no one to mean it no one to mourn the absence
becomes nobody is gone nobody is here
silence has a population of its own

Bach's birthday and Matthew's Passion plays
because it's Good Friday also is a mathematical expression
cancelling out a certain sickness of humanity
and making the human rise a morning or so from now
into an inexpressible Difference if and only if.

21 March 2008