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Not necessarily remembering anybody
he shoves his foot in the door.
Buy me, he says, I have been here before.

That time you thought I was a blue jay
or its shadow, quick past the window shade
but now I'm me as much as I can,
let me in, I will be the morning sunlight
sprawled on your kitchen floor, I'm cute
on linoleum, I'm so cheap it's embarrassing,
humiliating even, but I don't mind. I too
have been a purchaser just like you,
wanted everything cheap as can be, here
I be, ready for your curious practices.

I mean your art: cellar and attic, cool tile
and seven different kinds of soap, chenille
bedspread color of forget-me-nots,
guest bed, I could tell you tales, love's
espionage but I forget. All the things too
that I have forgotten to forget. The art
of being another day. Then I show up,
pundit of the consensus, stumble up
your doorsill, let me in, I'm here to revise
your life, just seeing me you realize at last
what you alone have been doing all these years.

26 May 2008

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Enough, or after. Or a rose
not yet but the thorn
is always ready.

26.V.08

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Venture to be outside
the nonsense of what I think.
Too many words,
too few to say what it means.

26.V.08

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The unemployed interpreter
scouts for visiting shadows—

let me explain the textures
of the surfaces where you rest.

There, that's what poetry is—
explaining to a shadow

the feel of objects and persons
on which they fall.

The touch of satin then
the touch of skin. To say

the difference. All the differences.

26 May 2008

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Is it here enough to be
where it is. Questions
perplex the place
where soul used to be
when you went to church
all the iffy spaces
hollow between the flame
of the crimson candle and
the Gothic architectural
feature you never learned.
What is the name of.
Something up there,
a flicker in tall shadow
something between
anything and anything else.
Belonged to nobody
so you called it yours.
But there has to be more,
somewhere herer than here.

26 May 2008

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Some other way of
doing light.
Breakrock earthcandle
spinnaker of foam.
Noonday across
shallow acoustics.
Skyheart unheard.

26 May 2008

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The thenspeak of nowmouth
caresses truth.

 Then lets fall.
Anything spoken
is only what someone
up there forgot.

Elseland. Scraps
of its oblivions
fill up my books.

Now you can forget it too.
That's what it means to be wise.

26 May 2008

THE SPY

A spy brings secrets everywhere he goes.
They are written on the parts of him
nobody but lovers get to see. And spies
contrary to the movies never make love.

Or if one did he would be spying on both
all the way through. Baffled bedmates.
Not much love would get made. The plumbing
of our gender arrangements gurgles on

and his mind is far away writing it down.
Of course in code. What do you think this is?

27 May 2008

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Soon everything
will be another thing.
And every This
repent of closeness,
and every Was
lament lost agency
and claim anew
the Agency of Go.

27 May 2008

VERBS

Verbs are the cosmetics of our hard-worn world. Make something happen means make something else. Do = Change. What if we left it all sitting there, lustrous in its close apartness? Or are we nothing but agents? Tibetan *'gro.ba*, the word for a living being of any sort, including ours, means literally 'one who goes.' Entity, this tells us, means preparing to be gone.

27 May 2009

POETS

Poets are scholiasts
of a great unwritten
or undiscovered text.

Every simple song
a commentary on.

Every image an explanation.

27 May 2008

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If there really were a country called America
who would it be? An Indian we never killed,
a White Man who never looked back, never
brought a Black Man here? A Black Man
abiding the strangeness of a new place alone.
Maybe him. Free us all at last from
the privilege of being so wrong. We went
too fast. Killed our way to prosperity.
Can't last. Karma Americana, fatal flower.

27 May 2008

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I know nothing of what I have been through,
such a long thick life and not much known—

I wrote the Iliad to find out
not who I am but what happened to me.

And at the end I found
only another man, another war.

I am who remains to be found out
and my most failure

is not knowing my own wounds,
my own Troy though it's bright with flames.

28 May 2008

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Hurrying thither, as a spinnaker seems
greedier for the yacht's implausible destination
than the mere boat itself, the mind speaks out,
sky the solitary witness, the bright stone
we live inside, no wonder we wonder,
confusion is the mother of all the sciences.
I gaze into the green thicket past our house
we are about to exchange for nobody's
endless sea. A humility in me after all,
someone much bigger than unswimmable me.

29 May 2008

POLEMOS

No more war.
Forgive the colloquial,
I am a part of the folk you all
praise so in your Marxist iliads,
strife for its own sake,
cute girls and dead lads
and the river on fire.

29 May 2008

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I stood at the door and looked in, where you were sleeping or seemed to be asleep, asprawl on your side, not usual, your serene profile elegant as ever, seemed thoroughly at peace. Your left arm trailed along your side and hip, your right arm outflung, palm up, pale against the cobalt sheet. I don't know whether you heard me, I was trying not to wake you, wanting to wake you. I said I love you. Perhaps other days, other anatomies of sleep, I would have been heavily playful and said *je t'aime* or even *jag elsker dig*, like the song. But today, I don't know, I wanted to say it in my native language, mother tongue, to tell you. Not a quotation. I love you, I said. Just the once, I didn't repeat it. Your eyelids did not flutter, let alone open. It might have been that your breath changed just a little, quicker, shallower a moment maybe, then resumed its calm almost oceanic quality. Maybe. I can't be sure, because I wanted it to. Maybe you did hear. Maybe the change in your breathing, if there really was a change, not just the result of an increased alertness on my part, anxious for any sign of response, maybe the change meant you did hear my words. But who knows who seemed to you to be speaking in your dream. My words spoken by another mouth, father, mother, brother, other lover, dream is full of persons, but not me, not me. Maybe my direct statement filtered into your dream and prompted the very detachment or departure that a love like mine means to forestall. Who can say? Or perhaps the words I spoke got repeated in your dream by me, some me, thank voice recognition, but though they came from me, the house or landscape into which they spoke, who knows what that might have been, or what was happening where we were. That we, not this we, the one sleeping motionless in her own bed, the one looking at her from the door.

I said it in my native language so I would not be quoting somebody else. Or in any sense be distancing myself—or you—by linguistic trickery from the fierce, simple though profound thing I meant to convey. My own words.

But then I thought: I love you, in English or any other language, *is* a quotation already, always. Even if never heard or spoken before, the mouth is prating or quoting what the heart has been blithering inside for weeks or years. And in another sense, love itself might be a quotation, one more literary allusion, to a thousand books, a thousand movies, ten thousand songs—all the rubbish of second-hand feelings that press in upon the first-hand heart, the honest heart, to give a name to what it so tumultuously feels, yes, actually feels. That make the heart rise breathless to adore. Maybe all I meant that I am here with all my confusions, here in the doorway, here, for you and always.

29 May 2008, Boston

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Home into dawn – after night
like an airline flight
never awake never asleep
between the temperatures
reading a blank page in the dark.

30 May 2008, Boston

ON THE CUTTYHUNK FERRY

Now to the actual
which is the sea, the ordinary beauty
of the thing, the way an animal
operates.

My young poets
shall become the Torah,
listen to them, the young, the always wrong
in the right way, Aviv, Kit, Alex, the way
they let things fall,
enthusiasts of everything,
ill-silenced by prudence, much
visited by providence. The deities.

2.
Yesterday driving north.
A thought arose.
As beautiful a day as ever God sent
they'd say, the trees full leaf'd but still
spring mint green at the tips
spring and summer sweet on one another
just this one long day.

And the high sky
no cloud, mountains west and the road
hardly on earth it seemed
skimming northeast empty over the hills
and the thought came.

I held it
then lost it, but now
looking out across Buzzard Bay as the boat moves
into blue water and pale sky and the headland far
through the seagates by the old lighthouse and
the boat heaves suddenly as we hit
the actual sea the thought comes back,
how long will I have to put up with all this,
endure this beauty?

30 May 2008, New Bedford

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The dog beside me
big clean shorthair blond
does a kabbalah of his own.
Kaleb, a dog.

The dog stands four-footed sturdy
moveless in all the declensions of boat.
Rise fall pitch rock
the four elements on the one sea.

Dog. How is a dog like a heart?
Don't give me that old
permutation jive. Heart is dog is
kabbalah is reception. Tell me instead

how a boat going somewhere is
like an old man receiving a message
from the moon, no, it's a telegram
in Polish from before the war,

and why is he bent low, weeping,
over an unreadable book? And how,
when you really get down to it,
how is a book like forgetting?

You asked me that before. Yes
but you never answered. I will,
but tell me first, where did the dog
go in all this, wasn't there a dog

here once, a real one, beside you,
beating time with its strong tail?

30 May 2008
M/V Cuttyhunk,
Buzzards Bay

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Things to be told but not by me
what kind of secrets do you think I keep?
For one thing, it always is a conversation.
Even when we can't see each other we speak
from room to room or voice a little raised
outside the house. Shadow of the trees.
When one is resting on the lawn
another voice from inside the house
in the cool of the evening. Always speaking is.

31 May 2008
Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

Don't know what it means
wasn't even there
wasn't born then.

The sacrifice.
The thing on fire.
The rockdoves flushed

up from the thicket
their shadows
on the flames

what does it mean
to burn a shadow
and the bird flies free?

31 May 2008
Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

There is a Quaker in my underwear
ashamed of war. Ashamed that we take
bodies meant alone for pleasure
and rope them into murder and being killed.
Near me the waves roll in. Long ago
I stopped understanding, and now I share
my ignorance with the world.
I've gotten as far as grasping in theory
you give a glass of water to a thirsty man.
An island makes you think. Every is enemy.

31 May 2008

= = = = =

There is a country I don't know
I live there
I don't know the language I speak every day

too shy for people's voices
I dote on messages from birds
cries songs mating calls
I don't understand and can't repeat
but it's what I live for

I am a citizen I can never escape.

31 May 2008,
Cuttyhunk

POWYS

The color of it: copper, the blue
left over from time. And schoolboy chemistry,
a penny in your pee.

Those old raunchy men,
Havergal Brian, Cowper Powys, who could taste
the spirit lodged inside a rock. The sly hotel
every common object is, chère citoyenne.
Giants they were, of robust articulate ingenious simplicity.
And we are monkeys waiting for our organ grinder
to stumble drunk from the bar and get us dancing again.
While they, they were woodlouse and alder leaf,
bronze carapace and agate eyes.

31 May 2008
Cuttyhunk