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Carefree raptor
understanding
verse or bows
broken and the bowstring
tangled in the net—
two gulls eat a dead stingray.
Low tide on a mile beach.
You want to be
on the side of things
you'll never be.

10 June 2008

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Close enough to be wrong,
libertine. The curtain
is on fire, the audience
enthralled by every flame,
every whisk of smoke.
The actors long ago have
fled the theater for a world
rumored to be outside
all this art, this danger
the books call beauty.
Even the script is on fire
and what little sense it has
consumes you. Be one
of the few who come to know
the play is over already.
Get out and go home.

10 June 2008, Cuttyhunk

A TASTE

stronger than possible or an admirer
wrapped in the encore curtains
like an innkeeper scrubbing the bar—
fill the animal up! only one at a time!
a horse brought into the saloon
makes the child run out. The child
sits on the curb outside and sobs.
Why this fear? What is fear about
and what does it have to do with me
he thinks, if you can call it thinking,
what a child does with his sobs
sucking back up into his mind, his
place where the pictures are stored
and sometimes they talk. What
does it mean to be afraid and who
is doing the fearing. What is a horse.

10 June 2008
Cuttyhunk

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suppose touching you was enough
that day and not even thinking
about you another was too

suppose nothing goes on in my head
has anything to do with you
though your picture shimmers inside

suppose I forget about you all day long
and dream about somebody else
does that make me a philosopher or you a saint

suppose that we are both devils
trying to tempt one another to sin
and the only sin left for us is to be virtuous

suppose it is really something like that
or a man on a beach at sunset
watching a woman watching a gull eating fish

suppose it is really simple
an animal couldn't do it any easier or calmer
and there was nothing to see when you looked

suppose you looked into the nothing to see
and saw something else
and hurried home or to the market and told me about it

suppose I were somewhere you could find me
and you did and suppose I even listened
and understood a little of what you did and said

at least enough to follow you most of the way home?

10 June 2008, Cuttyhunk

BOSTON WHALER

The motorboat belonged her to a wider world.
Hotels were there and seagulls all around
and everybody knew her name.

Not much more was needed, given money.
And money too was like a bird, came
down from heaven and just was there

even when she wasn't looking. Wind.
Things are part of one another—
it was light enough to make out the house
down the hill – we live as she did
among shapes – I feel guilt for all
I've been given, ridiculous, thought
I had to work for everything, I did,
but everything was already there
all I really was supposed to do is praise it,
praise each thing I've been given.
Praise is cosmology enough. So much
I was given, was dumb, only half
grateful, shoved it in the closet,
forgot about it, moved away, went on
making. I call it making. What an ego!
Surrealists are the most selfish men
with not much thank you for the world outside them,
I'll dream a tree better than you, tree,
I'll whistle dawn up better than you can, bird—

that's what you're always saying
said her letter to him, you abandon everything
by trying to make something. New.
Your arrogant imperative. There is nothing
new except new humiliations, new instances
of buckling under to the way things are.

But who was I listening to? Who dared to know
what I barely dared to think? The sky over that

island over there begins to be red. Light is coming,
maybe I can use its miraculous arrival
to distract us both from what she was telling:
I had done wrong. Made too much
and praised too little – I wanted to be rescued
in her little boat but by dawn she was gone.

11 June 2008
Cuttyhunk

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But a good day for one thing
chases another home.
Dread & despond. The clock
runs slow. You are a child
until suddenly you're old and die
or fall for the usual bullshit
and survive. But all the while
the gold-encircled chariot
follows you everywhere, patient,
your preterit, waiting for you
to climb into your past and be
a god but really go. This car
is part of your shadow. Find it.
The charioteer has been waiting for you,
she smells of leather, her face like the moon.

11 June 2008
Cuttyhunk

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it's a cold kind of
hot out there today
swelter in chill sea breeze.

11.VI.08

CAUSEWAY

to the moon the Irish
did they walked it forth
and back to killdeer whimper
osprey shriek. This
is singing it not meaning
anything but you.
Set this to music
then you'll understand.

11 June 2008
Cuttyhunk

CHIUSO SEMPRE

Always something closed
another gapes.
Hell mouth even
has its hours.

No sin today – is impossible
to do wrong. A monk told me
and I touched his hand—
No money, signore! he cried,
numbers too are closed today,
innocent of their iniquity.

But talk fast – tomorrow
all the words are shut.

11 June 2008
Cuttyhunk

THE FLY

Something supposed to remember.
A fly on the keyboard
proposing. A word
is what happens. Leibniz
in Hannover, saw him there
taking coffee with some Turks
across the street from the twisted house.
Compossibles. Anything
with anything in any world.
Yours. Or stroll with me
(the fly's still speaking)
and Hannah down the Royal Garden's
mile-long avenue of splendid old
some kind of tree. As once
in Annandale her almost untouched
sauerbraten at the stammtisch
cooled while her man was mean to mystics.
In those few good years when nothing happened,
summer was hot and winter it snows
and the wind said nothing. The mind
had seen what happens to the mind
in all our alphabets. Not just '33 to '45
(the fly reminded). I came to teach
you patience and how to sit still—
the only thing you ever invented
that's any good at a time like this
is grammar. Sit down and write your nice book.

12 June 2008
Cuttyhunk

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Then one commits oneself to something
then the day is done.
Things remember other things
and let us listen.

But high noon now the sea is green
all the mail has come
but it's still too bright to read the words
those dark conundrums

then a ladder comes down from the sun
and you can't count
all the people or whatever they are
coming so stately down

and down by the shore a man with a saw
ignores all this
and busies himself making long boards short
as if the world meant different sizes.

12 June 2008
Cuttyhunk

for more leads them out the door
to the bridge across the Arno
a girl in red and white or then
a red-haired woman by the Isar
to put it another way
art is the negation of poverty,
it can imagine not being empty
and wondering what you could use
hunger for then.
Spiral Jetty. Opus 111.

13 June 2008
Cuttyhunk

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But I've lost you now
or as the cellphone keeps
telling me out here
Call Was Lost.

And who was found?
And who is thinking of you
now I have stopped thinking?

13.VI.08

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To be without secrets
and still be Vatican

twist a bronze word
into the sky

to unscrew heaven.

13 June 2008
Cuttyhunk

MOORLIGHT

Last night just after sunset the light became a space I have never seen. Things still kept their colors, the colors grew stronger even, but seemed to hide inside their own intensity. Light seemed in some curious way thickened, becoming some thing you could see, not just something to see by. Visible light – sounds ridiculous to say, but that’s how it felt, that’s how it *saw*, seeing light itself as it touched each thing. And light I could touch. We walked up the steep rocky gully that serves as a path to Tower Hill, everything around us, and we ourselves, unified, *togethered* by the light, in the light.

Yet for all that it was hard to see, see in a normal way, to make out the bright pebbles and rough stone on the pale dry path through the bayberry thickets. Hard to see what was so visible, I had to step very carefully, to keep from stumbling, I felt I could trip over the light itself, or lose my way completely. With a moment’s loss of concentration, attention wandering, I might have walked off into the sky, or into the sandy earth, get stuck in the endless groves of chokecherries where the coyotes howled last night. I felt sort of drunk, a little frightened the way exaltation can make you feel. Drunk on light.

If I felt fear, it was only for me, not for Charlotte, I still don’t know how much she felt of all this, or why or how. I wasn’t afraid for her, this is her island. “I can walk it with my eyes closed,” she said, and maybe she did.

The light seemed to be at the uttermost perfection of local possibility, “full light” as we might say a few days from now “full moon.”

Charlotte walked beside me, assenting to my ravings now and then, for I was raving with delight and discovery. She was quiet. I still feel washed in what we walked through up the hill. By the time we got to the top and came down the old paved road home, the light had changed, and looked like any other gorgeous sunset, evening on the sea.

13 June 2008
Cuttyhunk

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As if it didn't speak
and meant
all things come in threes

he thought of rock: igneous
sedimentary
metamorphic. He thought

of animal, vegetal, mineral.
He thought of thinking
remembering forgetting.

He thought of himself
his will, its cancellations.
He thought of the sea

and for once couldn't think
of another for it, the sea
is the third face of nothing

he thought, the sea
is the rock that has freed itself
from its condition

so I will become the sea.

14 June 2008, Cuttyhunk

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Why would it take
so long to a boat?
Is it a breath
broken? Little

little things disappear.
Stand next to your number
so we can tell.

Like a clock.
Lost weather
is the saddest place,
the rain of no return
arterial the flow.

He said I am another
but he is the same
other I said I was
before him and after

and always. The art.
The air woke me,
this is a cry.
It means the blood,
so much is gone.

14 June 2008
Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

Everything has its tune I suppose
or hum but not now.
Something inside maybe hurting,
maybe beauty, that almost oldest
handle for our hurt. So much
I concede, so much I will not lose.
Swallow the diamond,
dissolve the pearl
 in your stupid wine.
Everything transforms
into its final self.
Where there's no stopping
either, it's like bird seed
scattered, isn't it.
 Or a cello
silent for a moment or a measure
between bare knees.

14 June 2008
Cuttyhunk

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they are not kingfishers
they are rowdy women
shouting beneath the bridge
and the diving they do
is only from the rocks not from the sky

15 June 2008