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THE NEW NUMBERS HERE AT LAST

1.

Make a calendar.

Make new days.

Count them with new numbers.

New numbers:

day to do what feels like doing.

Day to refuse anything proposed.

Day vice versa, accept, accept.

Too many yeses

in this world

too many no's.

In this new week we'll have no days

no count, or count

with numbers nobody knows,

the square root of ice cream,

the reciprocal of toes.

See what happens to the sound of a thing.

A bird in the rain,

the dark of thunder.

If at the end all the words still mean the same

our labor will have been in vain.

2.

If you're not careful
Miss Manifesto
things start rhyming
then we're done
and off they run.

A careful partner in a carefree dance
I begged of Venus and so she sent,
scarlet-kirtled and amaze,
herself or so one like as to
think the one is kiss the other—

all through the street!
in rain!
reciting Scottish minstrelsy,
Somali epic,

how in Egypt they had a heart with hands.

3.

and in a place nobody sees
incense drifts

break space into minutes
a minute'll do you

the longest time a mind can be mine

eternity means *outside* of time
altogether, not just a lot of it

or all of it. Time is a cup
that lifts *something*

to our lips
from an infinite other.

If we knew what it is
it would stop being other
it would be ours
and it and we would cease to be—

therefore (said Artemidorus)
we touch reverently with hand and tongue
not too often or too much
lest we taste on that strange lovely skin
the taste of our own mouth's last kissing it.

Who knows what he meant
(Artemidorus the Galatian
I'm talking about, not the famous one—
don't look him up
you hold what's left of him in your hands)?

Where does fear flee
so quickly when the thunder stops?

Tunor, a god with business of his own
his cart wheels rumble over us,

Thunor

seize a new house
and move in
while the house is still flying through the air

your air.

4.

And now the rain is regular, I'm afraid.
The roses have been waiting for this
the way they do.

The way every story is about meeting you.
And what you tell me.
And what we sometimes do.

5.

Rigorous animal! The blacktop drenched.
Pythagoras rebuked again
though we never even heard him speak.

Wayland the Smith now
hammering the wood, why?

Sticks. Batons.
New numbers. New days.
The decent rain. The wash away.
Spiritual disciplines.
Death of anger and high policy.
So much – still! – appetite.

6.

Out of sequins. More to be said.
This isn't decoration it is my skin.

I have always believed her—
that is what I'm for.

7.

New metal anger.
The force of dead batteries
burns but gives no light.

Or light is a corrosion of its own,
besmirches the familial darkness
and we suddenly – horror – see
the faces of the ones we thought we knew,

acid-vivid, etched in time
itself. Or else
why can't he forget her even now?

8.

Because – you know the story –
the beasts she tore him with
were his own—

will I have the beast-wit
to die easy?
or will I man it, fighting till the end
to go on seeing what I had seen?

When I was dead they called me by your name.

9.

I saw one time and it turned into always.

Close the mythology
there is a better door.

Bitter, though,
grass and tree,

thunder in the sky
an hour passes and it still is now.

9 September 2008

THE SUFI GAME OF ORDINARY CHILDHOOD

If I knew nothing about it
I would know about everything.

a wide deep wit
engaging naught

“Anybody round my base is It”
we cried
after counting to twenty or a hundeed
with our eyes closed
and they all ran to hide,

our base a phone pole I
never saw a base a tree

we sought.

A large game
encompassing neighborhoods
or the whole town
depending on how many numbers
were give for the one who was It
to count,

 much seeing and much running
and nature loves to hide.

And while we hid we knew the world.
And when you come seeking

every doorway is a mystery.

Who can tell the jungle of the mind
from these meager sumac thickets
full of mosquitoes even sunny afternoons.

And I loved seeking
and loved being sought
taking our turns
at being God.

10 September 2008

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Something in hiding.
An aster
late summering,
the thing
tucked away in night

is color.
Everybody be young.

Greed is a color
and violence
and read vengeance,
bleak is a color
and true, and trost.

Enough. Never
will they be young enough
no matter how far they recede—

resin of an unknown tree
brought home here in a box
of olivewood. We handle
one another.
And that is a color too.

10 September 2008

=====

for David Tibet

Exasperate any every and
he lies in the sand with his feet
framing the sea. What a god
it is to be alone. To watch
so much and be calm.
Calm as a photo of the sea.

We kept waiting, the worst of us,
on the side of the platform.
Eventually the sun would come,
the moon would start caressing
even the ugliest of us, his skin.

A bunch of rough kids
making trouble outside the cathedral
when I just wanted to say hello to Julian
or Juliana, whatever she calls herself here.
So far from the sea.

10 September 2008

=====

Caught as close as could can,
we will meet this afternoon again
and pretend to be ourselves.
No one will be fooled, they're not
in the mood for our identities
or anybody else. It's all funerals
and committees and baked Brie.
Something I wonder why.
We brother and we sister along
easy as the glaze on pottery.
That blue faience Egyptian fake
I brought home you claimed
it was my child some years ago
when this grass was sand and you —
no easy way of telling what you were.
Or are. That's why we use cars
if anything. After the diner
closes the night belongs to
what nobody at all will let us be
in the soft pale amorphous glow
on the Come Back Soon sign
but of course we never will.

10 September 2008

=====

How could we?
Was there anything?

A football field
at morning twilight

maybe. Squelch
of damaged turf.

But what else
is the world for?

10 IX 08

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Ö -u

The break-up
equation

solving for
the square root
of minus you.

11.IX.08

=====

Just suppose for a minute you acknowledged
your body *is* my heart. Then what becomes
of my fabled insincerity? Isn't it wherever
you are not? I am who I am by you being you.
O the heart's some days a devious Jesuit
utterly untrustworthy and utterly devout.
Such scraps of old poetry clutter the bed.

11 September 2008

=====

But it is sweet
the way a hand or eye
tries sometimes to be music

to you as a tree too
or standing water.
On your lawn after rain.

Who has a lawn these days?
Who has an hour
to fill with hearing?

And the archangel of seeing
sweeps the dawn clean
so all the angels of the eyes

help you read out loud
this all-too-simple message.

11 September 2008

CRITIC

I suppose *sweetness* (how he half-
hissed the word, inexpressible)
has an urgency of its own
I suppose (he repeated).

We

who were sucking on the music though
wondered what was the matter
with his ears' lips that he could
not even sip what we gulped down.

11 September 2008

(thinking of my own reactions to Lin's Sibelius concerto)

A PICTURE CROOKED ON THE WALL

Symmetry the core of matter.
Straighten it. The painting
by Isaak Levitan of a tall
thick distant steeple
coming up through larches
tells me something.
What. Reproduction
in an era of mechanical
art. Looks pretty good.
Compared with the sun
through adjacent windows.
Or is it a photograph.
Either of them. Or the children
who seem to move outside,
boy picking up acorns,
a little girl smiling shyly
at an old man on the porch.
I want to tell him they are bitter,
bitter, we Indians used
to know a way to make them
sweet. I want to tell her
I am not what she thinks I am,
a reproduction of a man
on an old porch, smiling,
a glass of something
in his hand, not me, not me.
And maybe it's not Levitan
either. Not Russia.
Dark green, but not larches.

11 September 2008

JOHN

And there you are
with your beard dragging
through tepid water
baptizing people again.

Always hoping that he
too will come again,
step down from the safe
sandy rocks and join you

for wordless conversation.
it haunts your life,
all the stains taken away
like shadows when a cloud

covers the sun or your
hand covers your eyes
when you can't stand seeing
anything any more.

All clean. All closed.
All gone, the one you thought
to wash away the sins of.
But the water shrank away

instead, fearful of his terrible
ordinary skin. That too
is gone from the desert now.
Halfway home. What else

could a city be but that?

11 September 2008

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A rock wall, my wonder.
And a fern
from a cleft or cranny

who knows how they live—
this busy world
so green and only me
to be quiet in it.

This artful silence is my job.

11 September 2008

SHALE

Memorize the cleavages.
Shale. Like slate, crack.
On this flat rock some
name describe.

Wizards near of leaf
and pond, small alchemies
unnoticed, collision
of particles all round,

all inside. Matter and
antimatter never stop
exchanging their
invisible ontologies.

Something easy
to pick up. Dear friend
I saw your whole city
naked on a shim of rock.

11 September 2008