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LAMMAS ON EARTH

We are not animals

we are among them we study them
to be at home
as they are and never are

And of course angels were aliens are aliens
we know that from the word
an angel is a messenger
what is a messenger a messenger
is one who carries a message from elsewhere

a true message or false message exciting or legalistic
it doesn't matter what matters
is that a message proves and only proves
the existence of elsewhere

we are not animals or we are animals from elsewhere
that much I know
that much I knew from studying in my childhood
the golden wrong-way telescope eyes
of lions and leopards

they are the heart of earth we somehow poor lostlings
are the heart of sky.

1 August 2007

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What we see when we see
is we are seen.

That is the blue
(green) of the eye,
that is the you of the my

when it is said you see me or I
am trying to see you and not just see

but be there for the seen.
That is why it is so terrible to be blind

the blind cannot be seen.
So while the light lives in the eyes

the whole of someone fits in the eyes of another.

1 August 2007

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But enough of angels
we can never have

the turn of the old rope
over the creaking winch
hauls new water

turns out we can drink everything
this bucket world this sheer blue thing

they come down and heaven us no matter who.

1 August 2007

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Not being anymore.
Or sleep sleep.
That way small
heartsmug breathless
small not more.
It is to ache
from loneliness
for what one was.
Ich vermisse mich
the closest it comes.

1 August 2007

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The sensory moment

forgives.

Newspapers
blowing around the mind.

Sickness is the wrong religion.

Forgot no injury,
but the river's kind of kind.

Away, away,
principalities
authorities of air.

I heard the broadax fall,
I saw the slave dig up his dead child
I saw the ship founder on an unknown unwelcoming coast

and I could find no crime I hadn't done.
Horsecocked survivors wade ashore.
They never told lies, why should they
lie to their sons and daughters,

it's all true, all the stories.

Everything happened

and nothing ever will. So call it now
if you need a name for me,

tell me on the phone
you love me or something,
tell me the jury is asleep in its chamber,

tell me the angels stayed home from work today,
tell me everything depends then hang up before I ask
one more ridiculous obvious hysterical question.

1 August 2007

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Armchairs easy come alive.
She won't listen to my hysteria anymore
as if the furniture intended something.
I tell you the floor is up to no good
and the shirt on my back is full of disease.
A dog died of it. Just look at the Adirondack
chair its arms grapple towards you,
those blunt splintery hands.

In hell the furniture also walks around
but the people are motionless, not even the air
knows how to move.

Just the tables and writing desks
the huge chests of drawers and hungry closets.
Only things that got made and then escaped
into the move world.

No, it's not like that at all,
it's like this. I am sick.
Children on a carousel
cut the wooden horses' throats
but nothing bleeds,

the steam pipes of the calliope
scream for the police,
and I am no better.

The machine is defective from the factory,
all the mistakes built in.

Deliberate.
The planned obsolescence of the human body's life.

The children worry that the horses do not bleed,
still prance up and down.

The machine
runs on running. It has no thought to stop.
We think it all the time.

The children
jump off and scatter, some fall,
brush off the scraped knees and all experience

and run off into the dark interior.

1 August 2007

AN APOLOGY

for C

Coming close to the becoming
as a crow. A spate
of grass go listen to
not barter. I will never
do it again, Peitho
is the cruelest goddess.
I persuade no more.
A crow calls
and leaves it at that.
Leave it at that.

2 August 2007

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Could it be anything, like a vise grip
or a hand saw, where two things
know each other and their kiss
is somehow permanent: each
infected by the other stays,

could it be so simple, that a touch
is somehow permanent, that a grip
that a hand did infected the other
like anything touching anything
and not changing after, ever?

*I send you one for each finger
the shortest one is what makes you me.*

No, wait. When a string gets knotted
you use fingers to untie it. But when the fingers
themselves get knotted together
where will the hummingbird come from
that knows so deftly to unravel them?

2 August 2007

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A night to come
The hollow of your hand arrayed with ancient alphabets

And even this might be enough to know:
the brittle branches of the yew tree
that does not know how to die: always

some life's inside, the heartwood, the hope.
The shape of all that we remember
topples towards waiting, towards desire

because no other landscape sustains us.
When I look into the dark varnished background
of the painting I see you there,

just a little pallor of a human face in all that green
and you are speaking to me. Hear
what you say: *An enormous hillside overcast with blue*

and gently we struggle towards the rounded top.
Where there are more dark trees, a place so deep in shade
there are no shadows, not a trace of who we were

when we started up, only of the dark ones,
or maybe one, that we will become
when we get to the end of *waiting*, of our climb.

2 August 2007

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Lady Catastrophe
all fallen bridges
lead to you

you are the sudden
acceleration
of karmic consequences

when all the causes
suddenly take effect
at once

And all the faces
I've collected
in so many piazzas
all turn into yours.

3 August 2007

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The light is a thing

it catches us
like corn or wheat
the wind moves through

and through the waves of it
some people move
coming towards us
with closed eyes.

We close our eyes to meet them.

3 August 2007

PARTICULARS

As of a census to note down
the *intimate behavioral horoscope*
of a given man like me.
Choices, tastes, preferences—
the sum of all which
will disclose what?

These matters are the shadows of his stars,
the quiet spoor or traces of his zodiac
as he passes, with all the others, all the
every other through their shared conjuncture
in the fallen world, this world that rises again.

If I take myself as the object here, I think it's terribly sad that I will go to my pyre
with so much left unknown to the human world, unknown even to those who live
with me and know me best. And a like ignorance in me will hide from me their
own particulars.

As I make my morning coffee, I think how partial I am to the cheap stainless
demitasse spoons you pick up in France (Champion at Morzine, €1- for six). They
speak to me of thrift, of a land where good coffee is —or was in the pre-Lavazza
days— more common, of Alps, of humility, simplicity. And they do please me.
Charlotte prefers the heavier, costlier, glossier Italian spoons, graceful, rounded
and sturdy – while mine are flimsy, stamped out of sheet steel. And yet.

Now these little spoons that make me happy, a tiny but palpable happiness, now
and again all day long, these are elements among the ten thousand particulars that
figure in my earthly identity.

Sometimes I think that all we are is our particulars. I am nothing but my little
spoons et cetera. Who are you? I ask this stranger, and he tells me I like to wear
red shirts on Tuesday, I remember fondly some watermelon rind pickle I ate once
in Reisterstown fifty years ago but can't remember the actual taste, just the
pleasure of the Southern Thing, the pleasure the taste gave me at that moment.
What can be made of me? I am spoons and Mahler (but not the Seventh), I
dislike green peas and mayonnaise, a numb feeling comes over my pericardial
region when I think of Spain.

4 August 2007

CHILDHOOD

I too have been waiting
under the stairs
where the cracks over my head
in the old wood
look like stars,

a sound of thunder
when you climb up
to entertain a stranger
to shake out a sheet
from the morning window

a flag surrendering to the whole world.

4 August 2007

PHANTOM PHASE

But did you hear this
the tender philosophy

of ghost hosta
that I come again
to make your garden

Easter Eden when I rise
lent-flavored from big leaves,

a dabble of reminders,
a Mozart in blue air?

I cannot claim
meaning for what I am,
up to you, sis,
your sweet brain-pan of courtly mannered
lady listening,

hear me in charity,

don't you know I only am a telephone,
old-fashioned, with a place on someone's desk
or night table,

you could clobber
a peccant lover
with me, handset like a dumbbell

and only you are listening.
There still is gravity to deal with,

sheer avoirdupois
airy even in our evening world,
the lamé sunsets lathered over Chelsea,
honey, the sky itself's for sale,

did you
say something?
or as if the cab
slewed suddenly to take advantage
of an empty lane

and we were thrown together
shoulder to shoulder
o gravity, grace of this fallen world,
and knew each other

and thus discoursed.

We were neither of us
flowers,
not mere power vectors in a status game
but something else,
the weight of things again,

that loss of status when the floor gives way
and suddenly one is almost
who one always is

again, but not quite,
never quite. Red light All motion stops
and we are regular again,
side by side, hearing nothing, listening to the fm Cairo pop.

But isn't everything like that
when you come down to it,
a stupid mountain, a dirt flower
not even successfully pink?

Which of us
gave voice to that?
O doubt is delicate
and so easy,
soft around your shoulders, doubt
keeps the shivers off, pashmina, a kind of comfort
like falling asleep

half-tipsy, confident
that when you wake you'll
finally go out and buy some Wittgenstein.

4 August 2007

SCHRAMMELMUSIK

A habit of one's own
a jitter –as of mandolin,
or underground café, Vienna—

of too many notes, more than ever
needed to
spell the song,

and all the others
vibrate in my poor spine
urging me inward to an unknown meadow
or onward toward
a girl wrapped in the world.

You never know who you are
until you hear something,
one note too many

and what's left
over from the song is you.

4 August 2007

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But maybe we're not born
when we're born,
 maybe the real
incarnation comes later,
 hours, months, years,

and then the pilgrim mindstream
finds you,
 smiles down into the meek house and tries
to make it one's own again,

 all that lust
 and skill left over,
 all the sense of size.

The rhythm
mastered.

 Maybe what we inherit
 is pure *reach*,
and our lives are no bigger than our arms.

4 August 2007