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Examine then
unpeel it
to one holy now
and then to be.

24 VIII 07

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Scratched glass
tells it is present.
Personality
is made of wounds.

24 VIII 07

SICILIAN AVENUE

An angle
off the proposition,
a bogus alternative
to some actual street nearby.

I bought a book and lost it.
If you lose a book
you have to make it up
all by yourself
and act it out with your life.

Better to walk
empty handed up the Strand
counting the empty churches.

24 August 2007

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I don't have to buy a house
I have some autumn light between the trees.
Horizons are good habits.
I whisper to small animals
who pay me no attention.

The glass is falling.
When it shatters on the jeweled stairs
the rain will come.

Girls in pale chlamyses
shuffle in indian file towards God.
It is the moment when everyone waits.

And sleep is our loving mother.

24 August 2007

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The things that left when you were lost—
skylight, for instance, or transoms
over hotel doorways, revealing glow
from secret bedrooms where. Nothing.
Don't think about it. That was then.
That was the movies, movies teach
promiscuity, you to a different one
every night. Forget the hotel, the light,
night tables with pills and booze, forget
the doctrine of vegetable signatures
you learned from alchemists in high school.
I'm ready. I have forgotten everything.

25 August 2007

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I always want a little more from an apple.
I suppose that's what the myth of Eden came from,
a raving hunger, or conviction that once upon a time
there was something more. Something gone now,
something beyond the crisp skin, mealy flesh,
sweet taste, sharp pips, harsh core, something
past fragrance and texture and nourishment,
something beyond the feel of it in your hand,
your mouth. Something even beyond color.
Something lost. Quiet snake telling the truth.
An old man disappointed at your choice.
A thorn hedge with a smiling angel and his sword—
you won't see him again for four thousand years.

25 August 2007

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Knowing nothing is plenty,
maybe even enough.
As you're still willing to forget.

25 VIII 07

STAMP COLLECTING

The place in Ireland
your triste beautiful
face recalls, sweet
world's end sorrow.
A hill, a glen, a shore.
Tra, the beach. At night.
Phosphorescence. Wave
crests. History. They put it
on the corner of their letters
and send it to friends.
Now you have it too.
You have been everywhere—
we're all born the same year,
same turf-reeking shanty.
I see it in your eyes
when I look close. I see
myself too, standing there
like you, waiting to remember.

25 August 2007

A THING

The longer I live
the clearer it becomes
that things have life.

Whether a life of their own
remains to be seen—

the first life they have
comes from their maker—
the maker's will
and daydreams and resentments all
enter into what they are
and how they do

(which is why it's sometimes safer
to have a machine-made object
for your own)

((but who made the machine?))

and the next life a thing has
is resurrected in the owner-user,
then all the users
down to this day of ours.

Then I pick it up and wonder.
A thing is so silent
because it is many,
has so many lives inside it,
so many wills
dreaming towards enactment
that it falls asleep.

A thing sleeps
for your protection,

a thing is kindly,
imbued with a decency of its own,
substrate, beneath all the drowse or
clamor of its maker, owner, user, wills.

It wakes in your hand.
Sometimes I am quiet enough
to listen to it,
the old song stones know best how to sing,
they've been with us so long

and a stone that's been shaped
and wielded and carved and used—
that's where the one true story in the world is hid.

26 August 2007

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I dreamed I trimmed my nails,
what does that mean? You tell me.
I'm afraid of the animal I will become,
tearing and rending? If so, who is your enemy?
But doctor who is anybody when you're asleep?

26 August 2007

SMOKE

Any authentic animal wreathes
breath around its forehead, horns.
"I succumbed. I smoked a cigarette."
With those words the chapter ended,
or began, I can't be sure, in the book
I was reading in my sleep, a sentence
on the boundary line between.
But were the two sentences one
proposition or two? Separate, or did
the second sentence explain the first.
I think that's what she meant,
something tempted her and she did smoke.
I might be wrong. The smoke
might be coming from elsewhere,
ordinary autumn smoke, old letters
burning in the fireplace, though none
was there, he hated open fires, fear.
He was afraid. But I woke up to find
a ring of salmon-colored insect bites
along my side. The dream had not
in any way predicted them. Somewhere
someone has already compiled
a schedule of forthcoming catastrophes.
Go, fetch me that paper, that I may read
all the krakatoas of the heart to come.

26 August 2007

REVEILLE

It's not enough to wake up,
you have to be awake.
And that's not enough either.
You have to know you're awake
and go prove it
by waking other people up.

Wake up the situation.
You need an assistant from the audience.
The lady with the fawn shawl, she'll do,
the one whose companion seems to be asleep.
Bring her up. The two of you
have to discover the right thing to do.
This is what history is for. And time.
Figure it out. Something to do,
with mirrors and red wine and pieces of string.

26 August 2007

MAGIC

We all do it.
The earth turns.

This is a causal statement.

26 August 2007

COSTLY MISTAKES

Blue riversides
carry the name
snug under your belt

notched once
for every time you've
spoken it

Seamless the sky.

26 August 2007

BEING SURE

Puffy clouds
over it.

The blue
of reference.

The book
I am always written in,

the endless narratives implied
by everything I see.

I want them all, all the stories
stored in one plain thing.

Any object is an intersection
of agencies
striving in obscurity.

A doorknob. A rubber ball. A cloud.

27 August 2007

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Quiet night.
There is an animal in the woods
crying calmly.
It is some breath in my own chest
wheezing easy.
The animal is not afraid,
it is at its ancient business,
hunting, being hunted.
Nothing changes in the heart.
Noise and breath and remember
and pad through the dark.

27 August 2007

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I've seen a million movies
but I'm not a movie goer.
I never learned how to be a man
from movies, I learned it from a book,
books where real men talk and talk
and tell as much of the truth as they
in their beauty and febleness and self-
delusion can get their hands on,
Huxley and Lawrence and Powys and Joyce,
nice or nasty, sincere or smarmy,
didn't matter, they said and said and said,
to be a hero meant to be clear
and say it, disclose it, self and others,
prophets, Freuds, fops, all the million pages
to say out loud what I think about you.

28 August 2007

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Aspidistra maybe
or blue convolvulus.
The words grow pretty
in my garden
like your girlfriend's
girlfriend gone to Egypt
to hide her blond hair
in yellow sunlight.
We are never ashamed—
that is our sort of beauty,
a confusion of my means
with your ends
like a rock tumbling
down a flight of stairs,
a world made
exclusively of cigarettes.

28 August 2007

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The mind is a sojourner,
we know that, pretty much all of us know that.

It dwells in the body
like a guest in a hotel –

where it comes from and where it goes
the hotelkeeper never knows.

Like a traveler in a guest house overnight
the scriptures say,

from body to body moving.
We all know that. But the mind

is a traveler too inside the room,
inside the body it has chosen for its own.

Now in the brain (we think), now
in the chest (we feel), now in the loins

or legs or hands. Or hands.
Let my mind be safe in my hands

this moment so I say it right.
Map all the places in me

where the mind hides.
And from which it makes me speak.

29 August 2007