

11-2007

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**Acheful weather**  
thought I heard  
then a black  
capped chickadee  
clung lightly  
to the window screen,  
a message first  
from his kind,  
blessing bird  
seemed to cling  
to empty air,  
sunlight pouring  
through the room  
seduces us all.  
We try to know  
the light, touch it,  
cling to it.  
Birds a-many  
wanting in,  
wanting me  
for all I know,  
for all they know  
I might be light,  
a splendor  
trapped in mere skin  
like you. Like you.

4 November 2007

= = = = =

Everybody's tired of your  
love songs she said  
but never tired of love.  
The song's a mere instead-of,  
be quiet and come to terms  
with the silences of being with  
she said. I did.

4 November 2007

= = = = =

Have little speaking for a fall of night.  
A kind of woman's face with eyes.  
As if. Something in a wood  
or woods. Belief  
or sensuous. A white man brushing his teeth.

4 November 2007

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What we saw from the path  
wolf eyes but no wolves.  
Writhing tree roots surfacing  
in everlasting thirst  
the way they do. Twist underfoot.  
Moon almost gone. Flesh  
is a sort of calendar, I tell  
time by your skin.

4 November 2007

## WORDS

We must follow where  
language takes us.

But maybe it's words, not language.  
Words are angels  
trapped in the social web of language.

Words are cries  
in the dungeon of language.

Reading *Tender Buttons*,  
follow where the sentences take us—  
is a sentence language?

Or is a sentence  
a momentary archangel  
leading a jailbreak,  
the words rush out,  
mailman, toaster, the child laughs,  
milk laughs, the bowl breaks,  
the floor goes to California  
and we breathe again?

5 November 2007

= = = = =

If water's blue  
there is a reason  
they call it music  
where I come from

once in Laramie  
or just outside  
I saw a pronghorn  
leap a wire fence

I knew we had come  
to the right place  
in brittle air  
sun rhymed with earth

dirt but magpies  
disagreed  
I was silent too  
from reproof

birds tell you  
when you're right  
or wrong they  
fly away.

5 November 2007

## LOVE

The needless precision of the heart  
transferred to embarrassment outside.  
A poetics of embarrassment, lovesongs,  
hangdog sonnets crimson with blush.

No more lovesongs. But dear sir  
the song invented love, don't you  
remember? There was no love  
before the troubadors sang it up,

a new trick, a new pattern  
for energy to flow quick  
between people, tender trouble,  
a cliché worth dying for.

5 November 2007



= = = = =

Something like an ampersand a sign  
that leads some other signs  
in dubious matrimony, their love  
lasts as long as meaning does  
and then a weatherstorm comes up  
and copper nails hammer out the doors  
and walls go to sleep. this was a house.  
this was an afternoon together, a little boat,  
a sulfur butterfly and then. something  
like a sign but not a sign. something like  
a dead child but not a child.  
which of us can remember a number  
larger than a hand? it was ice here,  
rain drowning in a sea of sand.  
coral when it's dead is very red.  
Tried to give you paper flowers  
you were mad, wanted advice not admiration.  
You wanted an admiral I gave you an ocean.

5 November 2007

## A BADGER

dead beside the road  
in Omagh.

A badger, grey, well-formed,  
comely even in his new state  
recently dead, outstretched  
along the road, snout  
pointing south to the Republic  
out of this lethal town.

Long pain  
of borderlands,  
beasts are fit inhabitants of such,  
their whole life in on patrol,  
the sleek grey catastrophe,  
it got me thinking  
of all the dying  
and for what? Only  
living does any good,  
if that, if then.

No more martyrs.  
No more dead badgers  
beautiful or not.  
No more borders.  
God, no more roads.

5 November 2007





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Why can't I do today  
the thing I must do tomorrow?  
Long lines of Virgil uncoiling sunshine on autumn's fresh leaf-fall,  
bitter with beginning again  
and again, always a war, always a man  
nursing his bruise and trying to remember.

6 November 2007

[CELLPHONE RINGS]

Hi, I'm giving a reading, I should have turned this thing off. I'll call you back.

= =

A *poetry* reading, I'm standing in front of a hundred people, I'll call you back.

= =

No, really, I'll call you back, we can't talk now.

= =

My own poetry, of course.

= =

From the last couple of books, you know, I sent you copies. I think I did, anyhow, you can check later, we'll talk later, we can't talk now.

= =

I really think I really did send them to you, no, not to your office, to your house. Maybe your husband hid them.

= =

I'm sorry, I didn't mean anything, I'm just nervous, I've got to get off the phone now, I'm standing at the podium, in public, the audience is waiting, from Christ's sake, they're listening to every word I say.

= =

No, I don't have you on speakerphone, they can't hear you. But I can't even turn my microphone off, the guy in the control booth up there went out for a smoke, please, I've got to get off the line now, I'll call you later, I promise.

= =

No, I'm not making it up. Please, audience, no, not you, you, please, applaud, so she'll know I'm really here. Please. I'm really here.

[6 November 2007]

= = = = =

I owe it to the other  
to speak last.  
First. I don't know  
what the other wants.

Listen, but who to  
as we say, who  
are we to say  
anything when

the other is still waiting?

7 November 2007



## ON THE DAY SIX TS'I

Six dogs no  
they're wolves  
know I'm here  
their eyes  
remark me  
I happen  
to the environment  
short-breathed  
like a stone  
ponded, a pond  
stoned no  
certainty  
in an animal  
they lead me  
athwart  
my own experience  
to a null place  
unregistered  
asylum the actual  
unexpected no  
has to be here  
the stars and so  
on demand it  
powerless to  
answer the answer.

But I wonder if that could be the end of it.  
Asthma is not much of a breakfast,  
the huge encyclopedia of the breath  
is full of questionable certainties still

with one mistake after another still  
limp across the page and knock on the door  
there is a freshness to the air this morning  
light golden from the trees one guesses

the door goes on being wood  
knock knock I am the answer to your prayer  
I said no prayers the voice inside says  
well say them now and let me in

darling I have my best conversations  
with a door Well slip your god underneath  
and then we'll see but the light  
changed the street started running

and the house like any house was gone  
darling our natural condition is Persepolis.

8 November 2007

*(listening to Pierre Benoit's flute concerto, first movement)*

The bird struggles  
to escape from the sky  
that biggest net  
the blue forest

and fluttering like a flute  
he is held fast  
in the meshes of what is.  
Isness.

How can  
an animal be so alone  
friendless and cold  
and nothing but  
beauty in the world?

9 November 2007

= = = = =

Sometimes things float.

There is a reason  
between the ship and the shore  
different from the sea,

there is a reason  
deep in the Human lung  
no single word will ever  
be able to express.

Press out. Yield  
into the ordinary day.  
Which has its reason too.

9 November 2007  
*(Benoit, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement)*

= = = = =

And other things go away.  
It's not remarkable,  
it is a boy reading a story,  
we'll last as long as it does,

as the girl does writing it down.  
We depend on her  
to go on going on.  
And all we have to do

is let him read or  
all we do is listen.

9 November 2007