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As long as the driver wills
the car beseeches the road.
Wise men of divers races
hurry in from the desert
where nights are so clear
the *stars cast shadows*
they say and who is left
to doubt but me? We
all stand in the dark
happy or trying to be
with the stuff that comes
into our heads *rises*
to be thought or do
our thinking for us star
by star until we hear.

1 December 2007

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But as if it were something written
or writing itself while we watch
—priest and acolytes and verger and choir
all together, only the organist's back
turned to what we see— but he
sees everything we see but inside out
mirror over the organ tilt he follows
the inverse or backwards of the Mass
—the holy (as opposed to what?)
communion— and the writing goes on
incense spirals curving iffy
words on blank cold stone.

1 December 2007

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Silk scarf for aviator
long time ago
to wrap a throat in cloud

weird insignia
on fuselages
three gold crowns

a bundle of sticks
with an axe in it
a checkerboard

terrible history of
flying swastika
color of dried blood.

1 December 2007

[=Sweden, Fascist Italy, Croatia, German-occupied Latvia]

DAWN SURPRISE

More trees
Than before.

1 XII 07

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As if music from another room
had words in it suddenly
as if the air itself was afterthought
and the mind leaves nothing to the mind

As if only the density mattered, intercourse
between things and persons unlimited
hot metabolism of steel consents to know you
you look down and see the pulse in your wrist

as if an opera happened in your hands.
Is this adolescent suicide or mature addiction
to this blood thing be alive and kicking
no habit but conventional mortality.

2 December 2007

**ET EXPECTO RESURRECTIONEM MORTUORUM
(Olivier Messiaen)**

deep gong
winter twilight
the pale dark so loud

and they don't even get to be dead

it speaks inside a dream
that made me
when one falls asleep
sitting upright
asleep but also listening

listening to the word inside the music out there
the concert hall the funeral Mass.

2 December 2007

THE BUNGALOW MYSTERY

I came into the world
the wrong sex and the wrong year
for Nancy Drew
alas because I love
a smart woman with wise solutions but
I did not come in too late for bungalows.

Not at all. The bungalow was
constant in the affections
of the lower middle class, my aunt
even lived in one so called
a brick bungalow in St Albans, Queens,
with a brick fireplace that burned
an everlasting stone or concrete log
with blue gas flames dancing on it.

Tacky, I knew it even then I loved it
anyhow the way one does.
Bungalow I suspect of being Indian,
India-Indian, from the days of the Raj,
when a Government Bungalow
stood alongside many a road or path
ready for the well-credentialed paleskin wanderer.
What makes a house a bungalow,
is it an attitude?

What makes a girl a detective?
She drives a convertible, parks it in the trees,
follows dubious characters my age through the dark
as they try to get rid of the evidence,
she's right, I'm all about evidence,
all about getting it down on paper,
my endless volumes of confessions
artfully disguised as trendy poesy
but enough about me.

Nancy, Nancy,
I think I'll set one more snare for you,
a trap door in the haunted bungalow,
a bicycle with ideas of its own, Nancy,
maybe this time it will work, the brakes

will be sabotaged, the wind will be my partner,
I'll catch you at last and set you down
by the blue-tongued gas log and demand
a clear analysis of what I've done wrong
year after year. Nancy, are you
even listening? Am I just a foolish
criminal who failed to find his crime?
Come with me at least to the bungalow—
is even tomorrow too long ago for me?

2 December 2007

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The words I wait to say
wait for me in the sun gleam—
upholsterers conceal in wadding
speaking-crystals from Martian radios
to keep track of lovers' conversations,
the export business in Lies and Prevarication
is significant in our trade with Saturn,
planet of truth – they need our false.

What the sun tells me suddenly fades,
a cloud covers what I thought I meant.
Secular rollback: my mother
is having slipcovers made for the sofa
choosing big pale floral print right now
sixty years ago these cabbage roses,
look at me stock still in the desert
desperate for a good idea, a destination
what the French call un but as if
somehow you could undress right now
and find your body in there, a goal
for other people's actions, affections.

You are here, I mean I am—
in an honest world they would mean the same.
But here we are on Earth, *Tellus*
as the Romans called it, the Speaking Planet
where every word lives in a city of its own.

3 December 2007

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Time doesn't so much pass
as get tired of us

how we never pay attention
and it just slips away

If you could be fine
and stare time in the face

and really pay attention
this would be forever.

3 December 2007

"IT WAS GONE BY MORNING"

(a prompt from Cooper Jacoby)

It was gone by morning
the crows were out of town that week
but something else —hawks,
harriers— had ridden on the night
and snatched it

They left a ship
to sail the lawn, a big wooden
wheel spinning busily
with no yarn on it but light

So many things they left but
what can I do without the one
thing they took away?

3 December 2007

SPACE

Something searching space
the hardest element
to find we're
so packed in here the fronds the mountain goats
the very cloudwork wracked around our rock

the other element the thing you have to die to see
when in the autopsy chamber they disclose
the densities inside the beautiful cadaver
that was your self or mother once
now thronged with tortuous meats

density density no space at all
density destiny we have to guess
all the packedness of our situation
compels a wantonness
by imagination work
a clarity with nothing in it but our speak

newborns in emptiness our mouths the only opening.

4 December 2007

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Pictures always tell the
same lies my eyes.

Or just different enough
to make me doubt.

The whole process never
seems to witness
an authentic you.

Mists of seeing
cloak the seen.

The actual founders
far out to sea.

4 December 2007

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I don't want to sound grumpy
I want to love you to pieces
I want to use the feints and rhythms
you use to discover yourself
I want to learn from your beautiful mistakes.

4 December 2007

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Structure this.
One color
among so many
but only this one
is this.

4 XII 07

LECTURE ON BEAUTY

photo of square in Providence RI

