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Know how no

and then listen.

After denial

the wind is different.

Sweet even, as

in the old apple orchard

they just rooted up

to put a science building down

once a fragrance

came my way

I still detect

lightly on the accepting

air after this soft

word I spoke,

this little No

so hard to learn

almost the last

element of my vocabulary

installed at last.

8 March 2006

(The Observation)

sideways it was said

slipping from the matinee into the blinding light of a Flatbush afternoon

eyes shut red dark red

always the human side the spectacular colossal predicament.

9 March 2006

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Stone alone already references another
language can't help it
language always says I.

9 III 06

THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

Words invite a speaker,
the temptation to speak is the deepest Lucifer,

against the arrogance of silence
a word.

Speak. Feel like God
for a breath. Who flexes her own muscles in you.

9 March 2006

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They turned back and saw from far away
a forest fire wrap around the garden.
Language burned down the tree of knowledge.

9 March 2006

SILENCES

(1)

All we know of God
is that he does not speak.

(2)

All we know of God
is someone's presence someone right here.

(3)

All we know of God
is that we know.

(4)

All we know of God
is someone else.

(5)

All we know of God
confuses us to speak.

(6)

All we know of God
continues us.

(7)

All we know of God
is what we say.

9 March 2006

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"a landscape is a double negative"

-- Jenny Hendrix

What is meant is what is always meaning.

Some tree, some bridge, a man still alive but almost not,
shivering in the shadow of its structure.

Why doesn't he come out into the sunlight?

Alive. The sun is too far away, he thinks,
the tree too fat for me to hold,
what kind of idiot would I be
taking such an lummoX lady to my bed?
Death is nimbler, death is

well he doesn't know what it is, do you?
I don't, and I have died ten thousand times
to get all the way to this afternoon
to this bland ignorance.

Forgive me.

We have all kinds of things to think about.

It will be a long afternoon in forever,
grass will sidle down the hill and someone
will be moving in the underbrush.

The way I see it, it will always
be your birthday, the surprise

of being here. In shadows
the happy shouts of children,
they know. They always know.
And what they know
will keep you busy as swallows
researching the sky.

And he will still be under the bridge
waiting for this terrible music to stop.

9 March 2006 (13 March 2006)

MIDNIGHT HANNOVER

Back street by the river thick brake squeal. She said clearly something to him in German he didn't understand. Or Turkish. There was a statue to his left, she passed him to his right. A man between a statue and a woman, him. Beyond the statue the river. Gay people investigating one another. She was dark, not her skin but her clothes he realized. It was dark. He didn't want to stop and ask her to say again whatever she said. He didn't dare. Would he understand it any better the second time? He would run away. Better the silences of the hotel. To which the sound of traffic would lead him away from the slender river, away from his last chance to know who the statue shows.

9 March 2006

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There is a dark wooden wall, once polished hardwood now dull with time and such. Chestnut wood maybe? People are talking, I am not, I'm sitting there looking at people talking. And then there's this panel in the wall, chestnut wood maybe, and it opens. A tongue comes out and looks for somebody to lick. I'm hoping one of the people moves close to the wall. I will them to. Nothing much happens. I'm looking at the big tongue and thinking: Talk to me, talk to me. Then I say it.

9 March 2006

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Something else waiting around the corner like an old pipe left half uncovered in the snow goes on melting whose and why neglected. You can't see but can be told like water coming from somewhere underneath the house worry.

10 March 2006

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Aspergillum they used to call what sometimes even on your brow cool shards of feeling let fall. If you were close enough to the coffin and so many times this dead one business you knew you knew and the love went out with the cold candles one smell as good as another.

10 March 2006

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There was another night happening in the night so you were two people sleeping at once. Two dreams had to fit together and they studied the way fingers fold into fingers to find out how that is done. How that is done is a rake or a salmon upstream or a man among friends suddenly wanting to be alone.

10 March 2006

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Is today today or did it happen already and something else? Else it seems is always waiting like an old pipe sticking out of the ground where does it come from. What flows through a person from where. Already the bricks were on the ground. There is neatness and there is something else. Something hurts.

10 March 2006

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In folklore find the full thing the water that was hidden in the well had a star in it visible at noon when the young nun looked over the coping and her veil fell. Such a long time the veil lay on the water its mesh tangled with starlight then sunlight then moonlight then none and all the while the nun was seeing this and seeing that. A lead pipe lying in the grass. Has the plumber come?

10 March 2006

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But there was something else. The pottery she had never gotten around to firing hulked shadow dusty in the shed. Who knew? Creak of board and cleep of sparrow the spring was on them too. So many things and how to decide which one was something and which was something else? Overt shapes against hidden messages. A word she wrote last night in dust on the shed's grimy window. Grunted with effort when she dragged the door shut.

10 March 2006

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The difference between prison poetry and poetry of other kinds is that prison poetry is written by people who know they're in prison. The other kind of poetry is written by people who are in denial of that fact. You call that a fact, he said. He said anybody who thinks there's no difference between being in a prison and being in the prison of the world, no difference between San Quentin and Samsara is not somebody I'd trust with a roadmap to get from anywhere at all to Fresno.

10 March 2006

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But the argument remains. A droll testamentary arrangement such that the swimming pool belongs to the survivor. What about the water? Nothing is said about the water. This is not Algeria. We do not distinguish, as a subtler people do, between the Well and the Water in the Well of El-Aouina.

10 March 2006, Kingston

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It has to say something to it. The day long past and no new day come.
Enceladus the moon of Saturn may boast waterspouts headline. Grasp at straws
find a somewhere else. Some friends were buried in the same churchyard one
turned to the other and said How long is this eternity? I don't know it has not
even started yet. When does it begin the third friend asked. But the others had
forgotten how to hear.

10 March 2006

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Something big. Something with teeth. Not so severe as an empty plate. Not like hydrangeas blue or pink depending on some other thing. The acid in the soil
The soil. Nothing like bats in yesterday evening's sky some years ago. Does that sound weird? Are they swallows after all? They move too fast to see.

10 March 2006