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16 January 2005

RADIO PLAY

Open the box. It makes a sound.

Box opening, wooden, medium.

There is resonance.

There is curiosity.

Sound of a man thinking about the box.

What is in it?

A color. But not when the box is not opened.

Something else. Guess.

People guessing.

What does beauty sound like?

People guessing.

The sound of purple, plastic.

A slab of obsidian, small.

Stone noise, gentle.

Do not drop this.

Sound of it not dropping.

All of this I give to you.

Sound of a man giving.

What?

Sound of another person asking.

Sound of nobody answering.

16 January 2005

OFFERING

The offering is what waits
for someone to pick it up and give it
to somebody else to hold
eat and drink it

or put it away amid last year's corn
in deep barns, quiet,
a few living things feed on each other.
But the mirror swallows everything it sees.

16 January 2005

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Haven't I told you enough
about my road my house
my little river my tree

my weather the birds I see
the people I think about thinking about me
the ancient alphabets
I pretend to read in leaf and bark

the moon above all and what
I think about her,
my wife, my window and my door,

haven't I told you enough about my gods
my table, my cup, my hands?

16 January 2005

=====

A great abbey with a missing roof –
God gets impatient with our clothes

It was the fig leaf, not the apple
that got us thrown out of Eden,

the coyness of our shame.
We should be ashamed of being flesh

or else of none of it.
The shame of our desire.

Take off your roof, your wall.
Be witnessed.

16 January 2005

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To know the face
of the one that knows you

to count the numbers
that add up to her

standing in the schoolyard
rubbing snow into her blue wool coat

no sun anywhere
but a lot of sky

immense skies over childhood
cold taste of her skin on the tip of my tongue

17 January 2005

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But can I hear it the bell
you mean the heavy one
with the grey sound the
time stone block cracking
housing project in grey snow
empty windows even
hard inside trying to be

17 January 2005

LE CHASSEUR MAUDIT

Eventually he catches up with it
the thing he's been chasing
since his first communion
when they first let him ride
the horse of the streets
all the way to the animal
he must become he became
and there he is his shadow
broken on the curb his shadow
crushed against the window
he sees the eyes of the thing
looking back at him pleading

17 January 2005

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Too much salt
the idea tries
to get out of the head
arteries press
thinking in
love pain and red
a revolution
in the eyes
a cold iron key
held to the heart
will stop the bleeding.

17 January 2005

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Will I feel this father gold
inmost working walking in me?

Is there really ever another,
isn't it all this this this?

A pear tree down the road—
they need some cold
but not as much as apples
—that much I know.

It will be zero tonight
among the numbers.

Air view of a foreign city:
the palm of my hand, empty.

17 January 2005

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Where the road went
I was waiting. This is an old
song but can I sing it,

sounds like Vaughn-Williams
setting Housman. It is cherries
on it in August,

it is the scarlet-berried
yew tree in December
it is at my door

and singing, I don't have to do
anything but listen –
where the road went

someone was listening
it was easy because time
was mentioned, measured

by months of the year
and people were named
–me, you, someone–

all bold as birchtrees
standing out of the snow
believing everything they hear

a different kind of white.

17 January 2005

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It's getting close to the hour
that comes to meet us.
We have trained the clock
to sing like a wood thrush
at midnight, we have taught
the stairs to feel like gravel
and going up is like going down,
religious types on pilgrimage
we pass, time goes by
in oxcarts, and Death
speaking bad Spanish
calls to me from the roadside.
I look again and see it's me,
sobbing, trying to remember
a sailboat lost in Prospect Park.
Even as a child I told lies.

17 January 2005

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Mercies galore!

All the girls in the Bible
are letters of an alphabet
disguised. Leah is A,
Dinah D, the dangerous
door. Rachel
I'm not sure.

 We have to
begin at the beginning.
Eve. Eve was H,
our breath
getting ready to speak.

The men mean nothing.
They are there only to keep
women apart or together.
Moses is Miriam.
Miriam is Pharaoh.
One hand washes the other.

Adam is still red clay,
unformed, no one yet
has breathed into him.

All of history is yet to come.

17 January 2005

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And then those footsteps –
they were in my shirt pocket

they were coming close
someone was singing

I thought this was my own house
my own life

they were different
they were avenues and corduroy

they like smells of restaurants you pass
they make folkish remarks to girls going by

And they were my life.
I could feel them on my skin

they way you suddenly
feel shadow when the sun goes in.

17 January 2005

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So many birthdays.
To be born so often.

Pick a day nobody was
born nobody died.

Sound of feet running
quick, furtive, gone.

18 January 2005

SOUNDINGS

Doppler effect. I am a radio
broadcast in your head.

Your shoulders hear me
my shoulders feel your fingers

sign me from far away.

So much weather
among men. So much time.

It takes three hours to say a word.

2.

Reading a book is climbing
a slag heap, a hill in Staten Island
where garbage scows deposit
what no one wants,

no one but us.

We climb, climb,
reading is finding
every piece of junk
can be a jewel the mind needs,

it runs the wheel that runs the world.

3.

Say it.

You have to stop reading to read really.

You have to stop reading and write
what reading makes you be.

Writing is reading. Reading is writing in chains.

The digital clock hums to itself
in Japanese. Don't listen.

You speak a language older than grass,
You speak nitrogen,
you write in carbon.

It flows from your finger
like the colored light the Russians used to photograph
with curious machines, light
coming out of leaves or human hands,
auras, energies.

But don't learn Russian.
You speak a language older than water.

4.

We should close our eyes as we read
and let our lips form new letters,

let them speak of how Time really passes
through us on its way to the market

where everybody is.

Time
is a healthy old man walking beside his donkey,

this is the radio message, sound effects:
the gentle donkey's quiet clipclop

on its way through you. This
is the animal that walks alongside Time—

what must it be? Do you think
you could open your eyes now

and write down a name for it?
Do you think you can ride on its back?

18 January 2005

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Sometimes needing more than having.
Sun on snow.

We leave crackers on the snow for foxes.
Someone leaves birds in the trees for me.

18 January 2005

Eve Dinah Miriam Judith Esther Leah Rachel Tamar Deborah