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The Greeks took *to tês hodou sêma*—
the first thing they saw on the street
when they set foot outside their door
as their oracle or sign for the whole day,

so I should take the sign of my handwriting
as I write down my red dateline
—how many years have I being doing that now?—
to judge from the comeliness of the *yig-sgo*,

of the planetary sign, the numerals, the name
of the Mayan day how balanced I am
in the day to be. Pendulum of the pen.
I write out what kind of a day I am.

8 August 2005

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Water always excited me,
to put my endless fire out

or damp it down.

If I could breathe in ocean I would choose to drown.

8 VIII 05

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Otherwise memory too much.
Seasons greetings afterglow.
To be able to breathe down there,
seas, lakes, rivers, wordless
but never soundless, material
but no money, everlasting copious
supply and personless abundance.

If I could breathe down there
it would be like being inside God
in touch with everything,
no move I make wouldn't
run to the end of all things,
the knotless nexus, the silkless web.
The ocean is my skin and I know everything.

8 August 2005

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To breed a me that lives under water
sustained by the *thought of oxygen* alone
as we live on earth sustained through
war and pain and loss by the thought of love.

8 August 2005

SELDOM CREATURES

schoolyard tyrants
and a handball court

a big rough wall
to bounce our guesses off

hard black ball
white cloud with black plane in it

water fountain bubbling up
with a girl bending down to drink

this was when I lived on earth
a connoisseur of unnoticed miracles

later her eyes were blue
as if there were nothing but the sky inside her skull.

8 August 2005

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Ambidextrous conifers
a spin in the country
how the uplands surge
in the Taghkanic Revolution
that Ordovician quarrel with the sky
we inherit road by road on NY 199
all the way to Connecticut
felt just like the D903 out of Thonon
coming up and up the gorges of the Dranse
to the Morzine highlands –
all trees everywhere
are citizens of the same country
and make us one with them
quiet if we to listen quiet come.

8 August 2005

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How could her hand
not lift the candle?
The molten wax
flowed around her fist
hot petals –
it is not easy to be flower.

The wall of my house
got broken in a dream
a forty foot drop to a busy stream
choked with branches –

lean on no wall,
go through no door–
everything falls.

8 August 2005

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By your coat of arms I know you:

an eight-pointed silver star

on a deep blue field.

And nearby people chattering about roses.

Lilies. Rose of Sharon. *Sexe de glaïeul*. . .

8 August 2005, after Breton

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Spinach we called it
or bucks as if we ran
out early every blessed morning
to shoot them on the hills

(what does a word mean
when no one listens
what wild dreams of semiotic
transgendering throb in every syllable

sexing and blaspheming all night long
till 'dawn' means 'terrapin under hedge'
and 'this' means 'that,' apocalyptic
identity crisis in the heart of fuck?)

we meant money when we meant
anything that really means. We ran
out every terrapin to milk it
from the hills, money, meaning, cash.

9 August 2005

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I never understood anything.

I never had to. It was there
like a rainbow till it wasn't.

But the sky was always there,
somewhere, out of reach but
always letting me stand under it.

Shimmer nailed to shimmer
everything quivering and nothing firm,
everything permitting everything else, smooth,
practiced gigolos at an endless dance.

9 August 2005

THE TARNISHED MIRROR OF ANTIMONY

Give you my first breath
the sign of word
first word that rises

a word rises
because it rides on breath
rises as the residuum the specter
the ash of atmosphere

it means the world
the word that rises
means what arises
in an oxygen-nitrogen world
all things rise together

from the ambix of the thorax
th' elixir form'd.
It is the only thing we really make,
this thing that utters up out of us
shaping, shaped by, breath.

You can hear why mystics (mustai
those who are *mute*, vowed to
silence, who keep *mum*) think that silence
is the only tool we have against the world.

And they are wise and we are foolish,
baby basement alchemists
turning this into that and taking
everything that happens as our own,
our chemistry set, *little tin gods*
on wheels, infants, poets,
every word we think
we think we have a right to say.

10 August 2005

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I think I'm in Thonon this morning, Thonon-les-Bains, where that great water gushes up and you drink or bottle as much as you want, free, in the little fountain house pergola, all tile and cool, in the park, waiting your turn while pensioners fill their plastic gallon jugs. Thonon market, Thursday is it, big crowds and acres of stalls and the solemn Swiss landscape across the lake looking on. I hide in a bookstore examining school notebooks to find one for me with the right heft. I laugh at my unconscious, best kind, German pun (Heft = notebook). And the laugh brings me back right here to Annandale, St. Anna's on the Sawkill, An, the Lady of Rivers, lakes and streams, Latin *amnis* has her name, and the Tuatha De Danaan are the people of the Goddess, De Aan, An again, Di-Ana, whose only known true sighting was in a pool where a stream poured in: naked, laving herself clean of all our slaughters. And he paid dear who saw her – one more pun, alas, that brings me back. Actaeon paid deer, paid with his body, his life, his deer life. Noticing language always brings me right back to where I am. I am here in her valley, a valley in a valley, the vale of Annan, the stream Metambesen – I bet *-an-* is in the middle of that word too – or Sawkill's Valley running aslant down into the Hudson Valley, the big estuarial river they Indians called *Mohik-an-uk*, the Goddess who goes both ways, the sea tide comes up while the midchannel, the river proper, flows south to the sea. Her husband's sea. I suspect the Indians forgot her, in their masculine way, and then we came. Never forget Diana, Anna, An, the wet one, the first one, from whom we are. Lakeside in the Chablais, drinking her copious waters, down the lake shore from her better known Evi-an, Evian-les-Bains, which sells her to the world. Because Eve is An, and we are born anew from every

drop of water. But when Evian becomes Eve and An, language strikes. Like the corpse in that Indian story, it leaps off your shoulders in the here and now and soars back to its origin, and all your thoughts turn into language again. My thoughts. Language brings you right back home. To your own corpse = corpus, your body, your own skin, your own hand, own house. Even if you own nothing, language brings you to your own.

10 August 2005

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The results are flames
but what simple oxygen we guess
could be the cause? Feathers
on mediaeval angels look like that
too, a dangerous rainbow
leaping from their shoulders –
an angel is himself the flaming sword.

For everything is Eden.
And from each ease
of lip or sinew a strange
impermission works
repealing pleasure.
It should be so garden,
so skin with skin
retrofitted nearly in
sunset minglings
then sleep apart
like Courbet's lovers
dreaming each other.

But there the mean wings are
logical and cruel – and always
they have the look of having been
there from the beginning, as if Eden

were always lost, and all our loss
an afterthought, a dream made up
to explain our present compromise,
this improvised
playground of our senses
that we contrived or dreamed

and they then, bright ones,
came and took away –
not it from us but us from it
as if we could find it in ourselves
to go back and dig in,
colonize the ecstasy we thought we knew.

11 August 2005

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Not so much talk.

No merchandise.

Split the wood

and find me there he said.

The bone of silence.

11 August 2005

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To talk
to tell

I wrote myself

on the backside of the moon

I found a word
that no one ever said

now I can't find my way down again.

11 August 2005

VEL' D'ÉTÉ

Try to listen but no one will.

I can't begin. Jews rounding up Jews.

How easily they learned the arts of the round-up,

the deportation. The holocaust

knows how to repeat itself – one more

lesson the world has learned.

The settlers are being dragged out of their houses,

old women and bewildered rabbis,

girls with their babies, it is all happening again,

dragged out by a government determined

to prove itself cruel enough to be legitimate:

if our own people fear us so

think how our enemies will tremble!

Yet one more exile from the promised land.

Trusting dark eyes full of pain.

They have seen it all before.

11 August 2005

LUBRICANT ANIMAL

These in their clothes
meager measure summer
hills she sang. Etruscan,
with every move,
knife and fork weaving
bible witch spells over chickens,
this hen is *rangée*, if you
eat her she will carry
all the hexes into your policy,
blue alarm, haze over valley,
senators, would you believe a bird?

Liver of a ram
by death *made holy*
(sacri/ficed)
set apart, we eat
only the lines
we eat only what we can read
the marks his life and death inscribed
on the living organ

we eat only his interpretation
of the time we meet in, hour
of his death and all our ever afters.

11 August 2005