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Then it gets cooler
then the man
standing at the coffee urn
turns round and knows you.

This is the time for words.
A word you think
is like a candle on a moonless night.
But it is morning,

busy, the urn is steaming, the man
is knowing you with his eyes,
he is working, this is called working,
even though it's morning,

you're working too, you're not
standing there for fun,
you're out on business, what is it,
who gave you

something to do, accomplish,
you want something,
what is it,
tell the man what you want.

18 September 2005

= = = = =

Tell me all the stories
then tell me the silence
they come from, sixteen volumes
from Arabic or before Arabic,
language of the sand, the wind,
the grammar of dawn, one man
spending his years.

The power of story in the man
who tells the woman's story
the woman told. Listen.

Then tell me it all again
starting with you, your lips
only a little parted, wanting
to take care of me
the way a story does.

18 September 2005

SCISSORS

1.

Orange handles. Dull blade
slice sandpaper to make sharp
again the Queer Eye said.
But I want only the cut words
not necessarily even in half
pieces of words, pieces of Wo.

2.

The he there rehears a bleak rehearsal.
My body hungers for its own peculiar kind of light,
drumbeat, thought of a cool
skin against my rough. But not the touch—
just the thought and not the skin.

How much cloth can my scissors cut
before I dull? The blunt music
of nothing working. Sand fill. Spelunkers
getting lost beneath my feet.

18 September 2005

A MAN

I was here before you,
this earth and all inside it
even down to the nickel-iron center of the earth
this three-thousand mile long pin
whose head is this half-acre
all this is mine. But I was here
before the earth, earth itself
is just the shadow of
a poor woman waiting for me.

18 September 2005

= = = = =

the apple hangs from the tree
and an alphabet of increasing disorder

listen,
something is always
ready to tell you a lie

18 September 2005

= = = = =

You can't call yourself a nomad
if you walk along a road.
You can claim to be a roam-ad or a vagabond
but you're still on infant in the system.
You still haven't spoken your body's
own word outside the law. These kids
in Prague and Katmandu are just slumming
at the wrong end of their Scarsdale neighborhood.

A nomad goes. A nomad goes where no man knows,
though women have an inkling.

There is no name for where a nomad walks
and even when he's sitting down he's on the prowl
leading his camel or goat or best friend's wife,
he is the celebrant of elsewhere,
the distances all coiled up in him,
ready to roll. But never a road.

19 September 2005

= = = = =

You're quietly reading.

Then something happens to the moon.

Night after night

you never understand.

In dream it feels for you

the edges of your lover's lips

and then again you're reading

quietly and the sky is gone.

19 September 2005

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At my left elbow
a leper. At my right
elbow a glass of water.
How can I choose?
I hear ponies
scuffling on the pavestones

I hear the sun falling through the sky.

19 September 2005

SIGN

A leaf left me
on the porch table
day sign, mottled
maple green still
on one lobe curling
towards dry the pattern
on this one leaf
shows many many
flocked before wind.
Day sign. Look up
from reading it to see
hundreds of leaves
on the lawn not
there last night.
The sign is accurate
the wind uneasy
as before storm.
Something happening
but something always is.

20 September 2005

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As part of the everything
this small remark,
a leaf left.
Sky mulch. Soon
it will be now again.

20 IX 05

= = = = =

Having one chance in a million
is having a chance. Having
four billion women in the world
is having a wife. Season of storms.
Followed by the season of stories
when the snakes are asleep in the ground.

20 September 2005

= = = = =

To know so much and not be known.

A hundred tiny midges
on this autumn wind
orbit each other in a sunbeam whirl

each one a god.

21 IX 05

CULEX

They stay in sunlight
then they disperse
move a few yards
up the sunbeam
and dance again.

But I'm the one who calls it dance
their furious agitation, mating, minding,
war, I'm left
gasping with describing
then they're gone.

21 September 2005

DYING

Everyone knows how to do it.

But it always seems the first time.

If it were like learning to ride a bicycle

I would fall.

21 IX 05

THE NO REALMS

of the gross witherer
among the dry diagonals
under all the hurricanes. Ha!
Spirit spurt from a Jakobson
sonnet, spent in a *flume*
of sheerliness, woman.

Welcome to this hall.

An aria sung out above the lawns
by the Blumenwelker himself,
the stand-off bridegroom
with the hair-dryer blasting
the lacquer on the cabinet.
Nobody home. The flowers gone.

21 September 2005

“Move three feet and someone will let you go”

--*Ari Braverman*

Call it one step
for a tallish man

he loves how he thinks
he takes the step

she lets him
it is a game

Mother May I? it's called
what has happened here?

A story tells, a he, a she,
a mother, a release.

Be my monster the way you were,
impaler, neckbite, vampire

she wants to say, but the only
way she has of saying it

is letting go. And when she does
where is he then?

He's in a story, a nest
of propositions snaking in and out of one another.

He thinks there must be
somewhere for me to go. A castle

underground, where a woman
is sleeping maybe

in a room full of spiders and flies.

21 September 2005

= = = = =

The faces the lost
faces in the orchestra
the players behind their instruments
the oboe's reed
vanishing into such strange lips
and all of them so close so close
I know each one of these musicians utterly
so deep they are so fully they turn themselves
inside out into the music's light
so I can see them as they deeply are,
I know them so deep, I will never
see them again, hands on the harp
river through me never again.

watching the Berg concerto, 9 IX 05

21 September 2005

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the way it encloses itself
like a bottle of prescription pills
labeled against contingency

white powder at the base of the cabinet
and everybody wonders Will it work
this time will I ever get better?

But then the gibbous moon
lurches over the pines
and you forget the whole thing.

Night on earth no room for doubt.

from 14 September
21 September 2005