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If there were something here
a meeting place
of all your because
in one gentle curve
like the quiet stripes on the petals
of the tiger lily converging
even on the brightest day
in that dark chalice,
a shudder
of quiet uneasy understanding
that a child feels
--that *has* a child—
when the problem set before us
begins to come clear,
the child doesn't know yet
but knows which way
the answer lies
or as adults have been heard to say
which way the wind is blowing
and that wind scares us all,
then it would make sense
the empty doorway
this morning and the wind
no different from last night
just the eternal variation of

what the sun does and what
it doesn't do, same wind
rushing into our clothes
and it doesn't tell
it doesn't know what it knows.

18 November 2005

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I've been fleeing from my body all my life
thinking I was on the way to yours.

Putting my body behind me
putting your body before me,
goal and definition.

I was Praxiteles
dumb as the stone
I coaxed to speak.

18 November 2005

“REAL HUMAN BODIES”

-- David Elson (speaking of Body Art)

Real human bodies
learn how to fill space.

The space inside real human bodies is so full
so packed tight that the person whose real human body it is
endlessly seeks outward

That is what a real human body is
a machine achieving outward

achieving emptiness.

What the packed dense compression subway rush hour airless prison of the body
is yearning for
is emptiness.

That's why we have streets
to run across
jaywalking slow through busy traffic,
that why real human bodies are happiest
climbing a mountain or falling off a surfboard
into curling tumultuous emptiness,

that's why there are islands,
that's why hands reach across the table

that's why moonlight

that's why skies

that's why when the guitar string is plucked

the sound goes out and out forever

and above all that's why there needs to be you.

18 November 2005

THE CAPTAIN

Let certain things remember the captain.

Who:

walked from one ship to another
and from the ship to the shore. Oh.

Trundled the dory on his back

half a block inland

and sold it to some sparrows

who gamble in it still

using our tears – our crystal tears –

for their chips. He?

Yes. Who:

carried a rug wrapped round a map

wrapped round a woman –no!—yes

on his right shoulder all through the market to

where? and by the way what is a 'dory'

it's a rowboat belong ship, oh,

took her through the market to

a certain church certain captains know.

A steeple, a cripple on the steps suggesting alms.

An organ complaining inside.

He took her in.

Was she naked after all?

Not a bit, she

was wrapped as I said in a map of this world

and a carpet from Tabriz

which is halfway out of it
and he sold her to God.
You see captains of the sea
are of the merchant caste
busy this way and that
bringing anything to anyone
and always a profit to be turned
a ship or a town to be burned.

Wait, wait, how do you see something to God?

You leave her in the church
and hurry away by night

weeping and lamenting

gementes ac flentes

but you wake up the next morning
with silver all over your lap.

19 November 2005

PERU

What does the name Perù mean anyhow?
The inside is bigger than the outside,
like a poem or a casual remark –
and don't forget to count the Up aspect,
mountain surfaces count twice, once up,
once down, then dig down
and all the inside of the mountains counts too
how do you know, who,
how big it is in there,
where, anything could be remembering itself
down there ages on end
and every memory comes to life and walks away,
it could be one of us, it could be me,
and a poem is a casual remark the world makes to itself,
the way ordinary rock remembers itself here
in our perfectly ordinary world
with gods half-asleep in every thing
and gods twice awake in every life.

19 November 2005

ANAKH

Who is necessity?

Her name is feminine

does that mean something

is there a prince of poverty

to consort this queen?

But Francis spoke of Lady Poverty

the way a man talks about his girl friend

and a siren goes off in the night

high speed chase at midnight

the state pursuing

someone who owns nothing

who has no art but running away.

19 November 2005

BAD PEN

Ache. The need
to write with what won't write.
The insistent
desire to do it.
The obstinate. To walk
only when the foot is sore.
Somewhere in our murk
there is an art to this.
The ache of meaning
steadily bears down,
glints of pain, gleams of comfort.
Reminding me steadily
but of what?

20 November 2005

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Let myself say it. Bare tree,
dour glass
that shows only me.
Then let the cloud pass.

Turn my back on what I see.
What I need
is hidden somewhere else. A key.
A door. A seed.

20 November 2005

SAYÃO

her voice's quavering under control
or my chest quivering uncontrollably
when someone appears or two men
quibbling incessantly over the right
meaning of what Lenin meant
are all species of music and music's
quandary is the quest by which
we move and try to live, but living
is quick, and queasy, and quintessence
shimmers in each one: *haecceity*.

20 November 2005

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Take this lax transcription
the world is kind to travelers
considering all from which they flee
and how few learn to stay at home
where life is waiting under death's tree

20 November 2005

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And how the voice changes year by year
but it is always you, always
the deep smell of how you sound

makes that business happen
in my head, spread
to my body and I know it's you.

20 November 2005

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Is it a mirror?

Is the hard bright thing in front of me a witness?

And then it was night.

The surgeons gathered round

the silver basin where the moon's

face reflected hardly quivered

and with their lancets began to slice,

divide the light, divide the fragments

till the dark itself began to change

and then there's nothing left of her,

just a voice in the sky

and then not even a sky.

Just blind men holding a silver bowl.

20 November 2005

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Denude the light!
When you strip
the last radiance
what body will stand
there in front of you
unseen? You reach
out and feel it
between your hands
you feel its
breath on your lips.

20 November 2005

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Inspection of gold

pyrites

reveals

brightness is *in*

things, not apart.

Gold comes by inspection.

20 XI 05

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There are registers of light.

Things I like

to think about: systole.

Heartbeats. Ravens

in the Carolina woods

I never saw. A child

getting ready for bat mitzvah.

An empty bus in winter.

Snow.

20 November 2005

(A PAINTING BY SIGRID SANDSTRÖM)

Wood shed north in Sweden
spectral urgencies –
dimensionality of color,
genius loci stripped bare.
Before the Sanhedrin of her eyes
the question of the *thing*
is placed. Answered
into light. Solved.

20 November 2005

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Aftermark,

a string.

Shadow of a string

and then the tiny

trench it makes

pulled tight on skin.

The ditch lasts

a few seconds

after the string's

loosened. So

the body remembers

every touch

a little while.

20 November 2005

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Anything here for me?
On the windowpane
a devil's face
in frost. Curtain
billowing. Horn shapes
against the light.
It's all right now,
the car is there
honking for you.
The driver's face merry
as she honks again.
Everything is ready.
It is ordinary, it seldom
kills. Smile into it.
It begins.

20 November 2005

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Stone whistle
carved as a rabbit.
Either it produces
no sound no matter
how hard I blow
or a sound so high
only rabbits hear it.
Even now past midnight they
stir in their burrows when I call.

20 November 2005