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Filling the cup from an empty pitcher.
Talking. Lying on the couch
like Danaë waiting for god to come
fuck me with clarity. I am not Danaë,
not a woman. Nobody comes.

It is talk. It explains
itself endlessly.
It never says what it means
because it can't mean,
it can have meaning but not do it.

Talk to me, I say again and again,
talk to me and make me talk.
Give me those questions you keep hiding
like rubies buried in the filth of your silence,
I know them, ask them,
bring us both into the day.

Light again, as if we needed anymore of that.
All the lights on in this empty room.

8 November 2004

SIGHTSEEING

Here is Sir John's room,
the carved writing desk from Siam
the malachite paperweight
carved with the arms of Tuscany.

Why? To hold words down.
Behind the tapestries must be windows
since there's a draft, but he
doesn't want you looking out,
he doesn't want that kind of light.

Look instead at what the weaving shows:
Diana at her bath, her hoyden nymphs
splashing about her. In a clump of willow trees
far off a little face appears: Actaeon
it must be, eternal beholder, caught already
in the trap of the visible. Fatal.

The whole scene stretched across the wall
narrows for you into that pale, unsuccessfully
hidden face: your own predicament.
Seeing. Naked. Presence. Caught
in the shiver of the moment.

Now look away and come with me
while I unlock one by one his other rooms.

8 November 2004

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Looked up. Saw the trailing clouds
were not clouds. Were the fuzzy
gridlines of a cancellation mark.
I looked further east and saw it,
a postage stamp
on the sky, the blue envelope
sent to me at last.
How could I reach up
and tear the sky open
to read what is inside?
I couldn't make out
the postmark from where I stood.

8 November 2004

Standard for Government Writing Ink: Federal Specifications TT-I-563.

In time, the ink
corrodes the pen.

Ink means burnt in.
The paper feels it first,

an essay on last things:
dream and death,

remembering and being
born again. The paper

is assigned the role
of remembering. Some woman

gets the role of giving
birth to me again.

The writer's occupation.
This game is called Post Office.

You write letters to everyone
and try to kiss them in the dark.

8 November 2004

ALPAGE

Ordinary Alpinists surmount
usual obstacles. But the goat
with six horns that I met on La Chaux
nonplussed them but didn't faze me.

Then there were more of them –
goats, not horns – and they all
had four at least, horns, and some
were true sixers. Not a mouflon,

not an ibex, just a milk or nanny goat
up on the bare cliff above Seytroux.
So now you know where I was,
ask me why the goats had so many horns

up there. Darwin's follies
stretched out in the Savoy. Mendel's,
I guess I mean. But I saw the Devil
and knelt down and prayed to him,

god of the rock and excess, god of goat,
god of too much and too many horns,
Blake and Balzac, six horns, too much
everything, two hundred wives full of milk.

Later, passing round the wooden shoe
with the strange blend of coffee, lemon,
wine and eau de vie they call la grolle
the goat farmer's wife explained:

this god gives good cheese. In November
we kill him and dry his meat up there.
She pointed to the rafters of the woodshed
where last year's god was asleep in air.

8 November 2004

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Suppose I took the colors from my face
took away the bones and hair

bones and hair arrange on white
to spell a subtle word

Arabic perhaps, *resurrection*
of the body is what it would mean

a knife edge to walk along
to the mountain lost in the sky

we see only the shadow of it
and call the shadow light.

8 November 2004

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Where the killpeople are
there is a lens
that traps the sunlight
never suppose the light
that comes through
is what the sun sent

The difference
is what we did

Our being
itself interferes

This is called *sin*
it is what we do

Then something comes
and takes the lens away
we don't like that

It seems such a high
price to pay to see
how things really are

We live by lens.

9 November 2004

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Unspeak the silence how

pervader backyarder

and my sons go in

 God tells me to
because he told me who they are

neighbors evils
space left out frost 23°

crow crow

Specify

groups of five calls collection
spare me the custom

9 November 2004

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Sound absorbing ceiling tiles
rough-cast reflected in
glass table top Indian
vocalist singing her sinuses
out high over talk hum

Sound too I guess reflects
some other texture
silently somewhere else.
Not above I think
but to the side. Far
to the side. Away.

9 November 2004

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as much as because
an errant schooner 1837
home port on Devon coast
not far from inland Sandford where
the generations . spill heavy

I don't know one sail from another
I'm Jewish, a shmatte in the sky
the wind makes move
I am Davega I am from the West
from a long line of booklearners
fathers of their people but
my father gave me a golden ball.

9 November 2004

SCRIBE

To make something say something
keep writing it down
eventually it will get to be ashamed
of just making sense

something will happen
beauty blazes between the spaces
suddenly Eden talks.

9 November 2004

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Measure me
for the coffin of your heart
where I'll be buried
in the green everafter
where cats go
when they slink out of sight
under the old fence
between Pine and Crescent streets
tomatoes ripening.

10 November 2004

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I need a roomier answer
for my stone question

boiling water, hay stacked against the wall
and a man talking

He's in you now,
the lover,
deep in you

which is why I press so hard
to be close to you, to wake up inside you,
just to hear him.

10 November 2004

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Did I falter again
at the need I thing to be?

Really: all of that is all of me.

Glomerulus filtration—
getting rid
of the residue from that by which we live.

Oceans us. And the so-
called salts, which are everything
before after-all.

Thingable hearts! woke under skin.

10 November 2004

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Zuyder Zee

now vanish't
from childhood's maps
John Wieners and I pored over
together before the War,
he in Milton I in Whitman tamed
beset by parks and Roman suicides

they called the 'Dutch Act' why?
What else is gone?
Obock, Goa, Pondicherry.
All the names
that children love.

And every name a suicide.

But who dies?

Leave out the obvious
the stone urn weeping in the weather
snow on Machpelah
snow on Cypress Hills

the urn remembers what the ashes forget:
this was a form once
that moved among us, arms around women
and a mouth full of songs

bohemian reveler, football player
expelled from Franklin K. Lane

And anything an urn can remember
is worth forgetting –

is that what you mean by suicide?

They took the pipe
meaning not opium
but a longer, longer sleep

and who knows what visions
scarred, scared
the wits out of that dream's beholders

those poor lover who gassed themselves
in the wife's own kitchen
when their clingy spouses wouldn't set them free

not kids either, either of them, she
old enough to bottle-bronze her fading hair.

10 November 2004

EPITAPHION

I found a tomb all sandstone and lacy ironwork
with these words carved deep into the rock:

Here lies one whose dearest wish
was to vanish from the world and leave no trace.

10 November 2004

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When the woman
melts into me
I'm free
to melt into
my final word.

10 XI 04

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Caught?
Maybe not.

A canal by a blue tree
heavenhoused inside the cathedral

everything is a different color.
Parsley. Parsnip. Wildebeest.

Now you've said enough
it's my turn

hartshorn. Beeswax. Lull.

10 November 2004