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= = = = =

How many miles of roads.

Be simple of it.

Power lines how far how frail

this power is

that runs our business.

Wind and snow and ice and shake

make failure of it.

Weather has us in its hands

no wonder

we imagine it has hands.

1 November 2011

= = = = =

*for Jack Spicer*

The formal is the futile.

By shape already

it confesses failure

of confidence in its matter.

Matter adores us! The flower

we can't name

regales us with color, scent,

bee commotion, soft complexity

but the cup in my hands

can break the way

its clay never could.

Believe the clay.

1 November 2011

= = = = =

A gleam of silver in the trees.  
No grail. Chrome  
grill. Silver  
is for the lost apostles,  
their shadows for a blessing,  
wedding of the living and the dead.

1 November 2011

= = = = =

I have never been here before  
it is my forest in your mist  
conversely trees  
is all I mean and fog we  
become as Blake said  
what we behold hold  
the image of some trees  
hardwood leafless  
November sun in them  
misit thinning. There  
that is who I am.

2.

again I mean you  
like a flower you mean  
me like a tree  
there is evidence  
everywhere the clues  
to some event  
that never happened  
breathless gaps  
gasps wicked  
things people say  
shadows in the trees.

3.

one has no right

to see such things

permission occasional

provisional to

see but not cherish

mind but don't

remember.

2 November 2011

## STEPS

1.

Will fares the down  
energumen of  
actual speech

infer men:  
to chisel section  
guide the other

kind to altars  
everywhere  
kinfolk with cobs

don't believe  
what the woods say  
Thou art!

2.

Close upon  
hawk in an oak  
was thought  
a species of god

arms around  
soft memory

say all their names  
slowly slideshow

furious mental  
metabolisms  
recurve (unbend)  
the strip (ship)

of time  
and there Mother  
is at last  
nude of her need

and all giving  
the arms she gave  
you are the arms  
you hug her with.

3.  
When the preacher comes to call  
not be home

greeting card philosophy  
but this religion plays

two tongues in one mouth  
Olympics of the kiss.



All suicides suddenly undone.

4.

In wagon hunger in divorce  
the car and everything and was gone

blessed sacrament of split  
the Emperor free again

for new mistakes! tree drift  
sparrow spasm and love

comes thrusting self anew  
this robot heart this thirst.

5.

Let welter what wants  
no story to tell  
waits the fuller word  
to spill seed its seed

it is the heart of pale sky  
the missing augment  
blank check rose tree  
arboreal posture

we are descended  
from the left eye of god  
feather-hefty  
markworthy moral

workfit but saw  
we a faery and fled  
or became one so  
hurried home

embraced the marble  
maidservant wrote  
our will left  
the windows to the door.

6.  
Cold of eye  
snug the battery  
into the retaining  
O-ring rubber  
turn a dark light  
on the doings

selfsame stranger  
bitter gourd  
the all-creating

measure only  
count the long side  
the need to trust

shoehorn sympathy  
into the shabby  
obvious of wanting  
as tops of tulip trees  
our loftiest twilight  
here keep sun.

7.

But where is it  
the actual man  
chewing gum  
leaning up against  
the machine it came from

like the girl  
he wants it to be  
the man who smells  
of wintergreen  
liniment smells of pain

not so much a question  
as a shared mistake

kiss me for example  
or a weekend in Québec  
but where's the blue

girl who stole all  
color from the sky  
and left her lovers  
only night behind  
the bare trees true

the girl they call Girl  
sun on lawns  
mist through fingers  
trying the hold  
the beautiful nothing left.

3 November 2011

= = = = =

Always back to try the old thing  
 new scatter pomelo “great shaddock  
 doctrine” the world is long  
 division of such fruit—free  
 math from numbers—a number  
 is just too holy to count with—  
 see David see Bible—but who  
 anyhow is listening? Behind  
 a purple veil embroidered with stars  
 gold blue as cornflowers in silence  
 sate th’ unspeaking Monarch—  
 palsied speculation is called religion—  
 Lenin’s stroked arm no more upraised—  
*fatum*, ‘what is spoken,’ hence ‘fate’  
 we Irish always knew—any word  
 out of a man’s mouth condemns him—  
 late for lyric later for logic—  
 the flowers here are all kaput—  
 they got the story wrong (priests!  
 what would you expect) Babel  
 tower did get built, we climbed  
 (clomb) all the way up and found  
 language at the top. And this is heaven.

4 November 2011

## PORTOLAN

1.

Somewhere out in the world

there is a man called me

*Just Don't Know*

said another man—

so many names!

And none to speak!

2.

Gulls are strict carnivores.

They leave the celery and onions

while even grown men sometimes

eat the parsley on their plate.

3.

“reversals of fortune

in the tea trade” it said

and it was morning

shotguns went off down

in the Sawkill bays.

Ducks dead. Four more

shots. The drunks

in rubber pants are

having fun killing

again. Men!

4.

Death the unsurprising  
animal. Careful writers  
eschew exclamation points.  
Make the words themselves  
shout. Even  
a full stop is too short.

5.

Nothing.  
Worth hearing.

6.

A shell. Small  
thing from which the life  
is gone. Something  
worth knowing.  
Knowing where.

7.

There is just  
time  
for this  
and then again.

5 November 2011

## STRETCH MARKS FROM A LONG POEM

Adam in tedium before the first bite  
then Eve told our story,  
Literature is the history of calamity.  
Or as we said in Brownsville What else is new?  
I'll tell you. A quarter  
every morning bought a pack of cigarettes,  
the *News* to read on the subway with  
a nickel left to feed the turnstile to.  
City life made sense, had measure.  
On the way home nickel subway again  
evening paper (*Telegram, PM*).  
a glass of beer, second quarter gone.  
Symmetry. Shapeliness of a day.  
And already ladies had abandoned  
wearing silly hats and hair was beautiful.  
Do you understand? We were getting there,  
the War was over, Moscow far away,  
the Commies in our midst were comical,  
pinkos snug in colleges, the Dodgers  
were still in town. It was all beginning  
to make sense, all of it, from Levittown  
to the far Jersey shore consciousness  
awakening, everybody buying cars  
clamshacks at the Hammels cherrystones  
with horseradish helicopters striped bass.



There were still people called uncles and aunts.  
Nobody was named Sunshine, Subway platforms  
still had penny gum machines, cellars  
had fuses. It was almost working. So what  
happened? Nada. It just didn't. We consumed.  
Things got expensive asymmetrically. Milk  
costs five times what it did then, coffee  
thirteen times, the subway fifty times more.  
That's how nada works, the shapely  
fit of things is gone. And nobody  
whistles on the street any more. And  
nobody gives nothing away for free.

5 November 2011

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New Yorkers don't go to the Statue of Liberty.

It's just a part of the sky.

We don't even think of going there,  
any more than we'd visit the sunset.

It's just there. A part of us.

5 November 2011

= = = = =

Cars go by

music comes out.

What kind of

dream is that?

The long aggression

of recorded sound

tuneful gunshots

we're made to buy.

I want the birds back

I want a bus

to come and load and go.

5 November 2011

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Thank you for the gangplank! I don't know what charged metaphor in your mind you meant it to embody, but I have stowed it—and I love the red rope guiderails—safe in my living room.

6 November 2011

(An e-mail I dreamt I was composing as I woke.)