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PHONEMICS

The spirit of it
is enough to spill,
the spurt of it
or spend
as Jakobson decoded,
we spill meaning into things,

we word them after,
hoping to retrieve
the battered self we share with staff,
the aftermath of us.

2.

that it could mean,
the breath abstracted
from the breather
let loose in the world.
Hence, word or spell or gosselling,
the propaganda of sheer answering
that every thing does.

3.

Makes you know you're here..

Makes you here.

To open the door

that isn't there.

To go in.

To blow the wall down

and breathe it up again.

Next time in Jerusalem.

When Jerusalem gets here.

14 November 2013

VIATOR

**a small car even
grows its way uphill.**

**The effort
to be. The will
as only fuel.
The will.**

Distinguish being from going.

**I can't, I speak
the wrong language.**

**Do it anyway
or stay.**

Yes, but no.

**I am
the traveler who stays home.**

***Domi*, rare second declension locative. To be at home.**

14 November 2013.

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Doing what has to be done.

Eavesdrop on silence.

Let the trees know you're coming.

Don't you know

things stop talking when we come in?

I thought I was all alone in the woods

but then there was me.

14 November 2013

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**You never know when beauty will happen
it can crack like an egg
or fly out at you softly
like a moth from the breadbox,
a sign that things have been going on
beneath your notice and suddenly
your attention is caught. Beauty
is the rasp of your attention.**

15 November 2013.

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**Look who's is waiting now
and why with the camera
this remembering machine
that never works,**

**it can't for instance hold the weather
and weather is most of what happens.**

**What we feel. Still,
there she is, docile, nude,
and the eyes of the photographer,
glisten with almost meaningless tears.**

15 November 2013.

UNDERSTANDING POETRY

**If you've ever been caught in the rain
you understand poetry.**

**It comes at you with a mind of its own,
touches you everywhere and not just when you see it,**

**makes you disheveled, your eyes
blinking the weather out,**

**you lick it on your lips
as if what comes down makes you speak.**

But will you ever understand the rain?

15 November 2015.

HOW TO WRITE

**Make something happen
in their heads,
their hearts if they have them,
in their will.**

**Become a part
of what makes them go on.**

15 November 2013.

=====

**If I went traveling now
I'd only find some tree
to look at, a shadow
falling down the mountain side,
cloud over castle.
Love means to stay with what is here.**

15 November 2013

IN THE IMAGINARY CITY

As if they were going to the temple
but fell into the piles of slush and grey snow
and lay there crying out not for help
but to the gods to rectify the abysmal
unchastity of the world, things stuck
into other things, skins pressed on wet skin

for they are pagans and believe the trees
and every bird, and trust the hasty water
most of all, even here by the Chicago
River that will by spring have drained
all this humiliation east away. Lie there,
the snow was meant for you, the police
are there to help you to your feet, maybe
brush the snow off your shoulders, smile
and ask if you're all right. And suddenly you are.

15 November 2013

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**Asking for it
maybe. Your lips
curled around an answer
are the answer. Your eyes
looking away see right
through me. This is Torah.
This is all there is to know.**

15 November 2013

THE BOOK OF THE JOKE

1.

You can't wash your hands in a buffalo
the man says, laughter comes easy
in the treeless world of restaurants, houses.
It's hard to snicker in the woods.
Those things are always listening,
tall, arms up raised
in shock or praise. Like the *monitors*
we had in school, ordinary children
just like us but by white
shirts empowered, by armbands;
they were little gods. They told on us.

2.

**Because humor is the last sin left us,
to laugh at how things happen
or even how they are, actually are,**

**to sin against the ancient propriety
of matter, to laugh at sheer being
and get away with it, for a while.**

3.

And then we happen too.

And if we're lucky

people laugh at us out loud,

mock our words and gait and manners

so we know we too are of this country,

we too have happened to the earth.

16 November 2013

A BIRTHDAY CARD

(for Crichton)

King Solomon called today
and asked about you.
It's her birthday I told him.
All the better, said he,
I want her for my harem,
she'll be my thousand and first wife.
She's married already, I said,
all the better, said he,
she knows how it goes,
the stuff with a man and a maaid.
She's not even Jewish,
I reasoned. All the better,
said he, none of them are,
I'm Jewish enough for them all.
I was getting desperate
to protect you from this ogling
poet of a potentate –
she's smart and sassy
and sensitive and given over
to profound reflection upon
art and being. Aha,

**says he, she'll help me
sing my songs and
keep them keen and deep.
That's true, I admitted,
for years that's what
she's done for lots of us.**

16 November 2013

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**The eyes know
how to smell
the bell ringing.
Night arose
from the steeple
and went home
to its sweet hell.
In this town
we speak the truth
or not at all.
The eyes at least
don't know how to lie.
In our church
the Mass is ended
but people linger.
There is something more,
something coming, something
to remember.
We wait through
the whole day
then Sister Night
comes again and tells
us go home and sleep —
go to school**

**in your busy dreams
and when you wake
the Mass you heard
will have worked
its message through,
mass means sending,
something has been sent.
Only in your dream
can it be received.
Sleep the message,
sleepyheads,
smell the morning
with closed eyes.**

16 November 2013