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Walk around and see who's there
opera playing through a kitchen window
sweet mild far-away of potatoes boiling
Puccini sounds like Tosca who
lives in my old neighborhood a cat
on the stoop a man asleep on the porch
Passover coming strange packages
in the grocery in the wake of shamrocks
soda bread. I am alone again as in a dream
no room for more than one the bracing
sensual smell of summer asphalt soft
beneath my feet the human condition
dull books pretty girls the street.
Where is my car? Where is my
adult intellect that once held great
minds in mind because thinking alone
is the cure for loneliness that friends
and lovers only make worse? Only
alone can you heal loneliness.

22 March 2012

=====

I worry about things that come in vans—
things that live in small dark caves on wheels.
What sunset could fit in there or surfer's wave
or swirling orchestra playing Richard Strauss
or Sappho's summerhouse with girls busy reading.
Just cardboard crates and sinister implements.
All tools are weapons. Every job is murder.
Don't let the white van idle at my door.

22 March 2012

=====

The heart and loins
will still be here
after irony rusts away.

22.III.12

=====

If I could map the river
where it flows through a page
I have not yet written
and bathe in it, maybe
even learn to swim
the length of it, and dally
in those cool shallows where
herons come to feed
I would learn what words
to set in place there
and write at last the message I was born to write.

22 March 2012

=====

A bird called me
from my sundeck doze

woodpecker then crows
but at first blink

I knew nothing of this world I was
so bright the shine and the warm cries

I am alone the only night
hold the darkling close inside

to spill as ink in a blank world—
my mark it would be but not me.

I am in the place the light goes
when they say the light goes out.

22 March 2012

THE NEED CAUGHT

Spill the long river
into the silver cup

drink time
your sluttish master

till all's you
and nowhere to go.

23 March 2012

=====

Through the reed sea
the prince of Egypt
led them. Then
pretending to die
he left them there
and went home.
But brought the desert
with him—a shadow
fell on the gods
and everywhere crept in
the doubt that is God.

23 March 2012

=====

Things that once were here
the water on the chandelier

the bike that rolls beneath the ground
all lordly opposites.

Magic

you ask about—you do it
with your thighs, you wait

until the lightning comes
then send it out to do your work

in the city of the unalert—
your personal machinery.

23 March 2012

SURVIVANCE

The gods inhabit us.
One by one they enter us
and do their work
with our hands and voices.
Through us they come
into the world again.
And some are new gods
come for the first time
they taste and smell like us.

23 March 2012

QUOTA

Why couldn't I have written more
yesterday? And what about tomorrow,
will I meet my quota as the Sun
meets hers even now overwhelming the trees?

To be utterly part of nature means to do
immensely what only humans can do,
to make and imagine, natural as birds fly,
do what is peculiar to us, our own,

eigenvalue to steal a word
out of another urgent human art,
the gorgeous art of counting things that aren't there.

24 March 2012

ROAD

Stop thinking about where cabs go
and who goes in them
and what their arrival will celebrate
porters handing out luggage
and parrots shouting in the trees
and the ocean answering.
Just stop thinking.

24 March 2012

NAMES

I'd like to write
all their names down

like a Mormon
marrying everybody

who ever lived
every name a contract

with the earth.

It would be a beautiful way
to spend a weekend in the country
writing plain the names of everyone you ever knew
but that just means the names that you recall.
So late Sunday night, exhausted,
you're left with the nameless ones you remember.
the figure outlines at sunset way out on the jetty
or when you were thirteen years old
the girl on the bus whose shirt said Touch Me and you didn't.

24 March 2012

=====

walking slowly
like a man between jobs

walking on the level
the flat the cites of the plain

everything tells the way you walk.

24.III.12

=====

Walking slow
no way to go

don't say
I never told

over the hill
no way away.

24 March 2012

=====

I feel guilt
sitting here

because I'm just
sitting here

feeling guilty.
Why can't I be?

24 March 2012

=====

Webs are growing between my fingers
between my index fingers and my thumbs too
it is an immune system retrofit misalignment
caused by certain prayers I said when I stood
on pale feet among living seaweeds off
the rocks of Moshup's island far away.
Why did I pray? I wanted the things
the old gods give: sinuous mind, lewd
music, magnetic fingertips, lips
that can summon anyone to come close,
close. I got what I wanted but see now
I pay the price, I am turning into
what I adored, like a child at the movies
who never leaves the theater ever again
because in his case the movie never ends.

24 March 2012

=====

Mine was waiting. Yours?

A child, a flowering quince tree, a horse on the hill.

They are beautiful, I beheld as I was waiting.

I saw you watching one time and I wondered.

It was me, it was a pleasant life you had, your house.

And you were in the trees at the edge of the woods.

Mostly I waited there, sometimes looking out, mostly looking in.

What did you see when you looked in there?

Mostly shadows of what I had seen.

But was there anything more, anything new?

There was, as there was more in you than child.

Yes but I seldom knew it, children are so loud.

And the forest is so interesting it distracted me from my work.

From what, how can you be distracted from waiting?

Sometimes things were so lovely that I did.

Did what? were they wrong things?

Maybe doing anything is wrong when you're just waiting.

A kind of adultery, you mean?

That's right, a good thing spoiling a better thing.

Are you still waiting?

Sometimes I think it's here already, what I was waiting for.

Don't you know?

Waiting is not a good training for knowing.

Maybe you were waiting to tell me that.

That seems self-centered of you but might be true.

We never know who we're going to meet.

Or what's going to come out of your mouth.

I never thought I'd tell anyone what I told you.

You haven't told, I haven't listened.

But we were close to it, we were close.

I don't know any more, maybe I am your child.

Maybe I have joined you in the waiting.

25 March 2012

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Tombstones are mirrors
compose your epitaph
and hopes the gods are listening
carve your death date
deep into granite
and live beyond it
disappointing all your friends.

This is not a cynical remark—
we live always in some sense
ready for the death of those we love.

25 March 2012

Wehe, o Wehe!

I keep hearing
the Emperor cry,
woe o woe
his falcon flown
away from now
and who knows where?
all things are lost
when such birds fly
and I am wilderness.

25 March 2012

=====

Inside the Temple

the world is praying to itself.

(Temple is the circumscribed place
the ground within the *temenos*)

The Norse had this in mind when they spoke of Odin—
three days and three nights hanging in the tree
sacrificing himself to himself—

but we are humans and offer bread and wine
and yellow flowers, first of springtime

weaklings we are, but we also come to know.)

25 March 2012