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FRIGHTENED

**if the machine
faltered.**

**Time too
is a kind of mechanism
geared by another.**

A prison.

**And there is no time
when nothing is green,
it is the song of the place
the pretty girl behind the bar
needles on midwinter pines
the copper in the blood.
The song. The law.
We are how it has to be.**

2.

**I had forgotten the machine
but it still ran me.
Runs me.**

3.

**My eyes in the mirror
are your eyes, see
what you have seen.**

**There is only so much light
to go around.**

4.

**O who made up the word
liberty to tease us with
an illusory calm
when we have to do nothing but be?
Where is that place
and who knows it?**

*The flower knows it
by soon waiting*

**nothing to hold onto
nothing to hold.**

15 August 2013

RE/VISING

leaves to pasture other mind—
the hungry ear repeats all it hears
or as much as its clumsy fingers can

— with variations —
a poem or an aqueduct in Wales
along which boats coast across the sky

over an unpronounceable valley below,
she told me so, or else a Gothic wall
with my name gouged in it a thousand years ago.

It is the pen that never runs out of ink
stainless beauty and the gorgeous ruddiness of rust
the busy world panting to be described,

old folklore and centrifuge and thigh.

16 August 2013

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**Things find their way in
before we can even begin.
The table I left empty
now littered with flowers food
and poems by lovely other people.
The fairies did this,
the universal generosity of all we do not see,
we zealous over-witnesses.
Out of the dark the earnest flowers march.**

16 August 2013

SIN

As if they had lost their way
 but did the word have any
 to begin with, any meaning
 for them anymore?

At that word the sphincters
 used to quiver in delicious satin
 twinges of lust anticipated
 or as we say in Yiddish on the other
 hand a *shrek*, a clench of fear
 of what we did. Of what we do.

And who are they? And who are we?

2.

They say the word *sin* comes from the word *to be*
 in German. *Sein*. Being.

We are to understand that years ago
 through all the interminable annals of the confessional
 professors of moral theology (and frightened
 little children in the dark) would ask one another
 is such and such an evil deed, a *peccatum*
mortale sive veniale, an act however glad
 (you can almost tell by how appealing!)

leads you straight or crooked down to hell?

And to each act, or most of them, the answer came

It is, it is. It is.

**So the word for *is* became
the nickname for iniquity.**

**Hell is logical enough—we could not sin
if we did not exist. And Hell
surely thought the questions up
and forged with hate the single answer
to torture us with endless guilt
and the sinister illusion of free will.**

17 August 2013

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**He wanted
and those who want
to be carried off to fairyland
are seldom taken**

**but sometimes quiet yearning works
and deep skepticism
about ordinary politics
so one day They let you feel their skin**

then you are in.

18 August 2013

=====

**Being not sure is sure enough—
how much can we ask of the weather?
The crow tells me as much as I dare to understand,
my hair is wet, the air is cold.**

**And without travelling half a mile
I want to be in that other country
further than Larkin's China, closer
even than your hands. Morning on earth.**

Here I am already there.

18 August 2013

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**Not hymn but solo tune
the parish priest jogs by
a curious flat-footed
wrist-flapping shuffle.
Health is to be had?**

18.VIII.13

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**The etymology of tomorrow
is deep inside the present mind.
Not the mind you read this with,
only the mind that remembers it
after you forget.**

18 August 2013

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**And then there's Egypt
not the murderous now
(what can we expect of a land
famous mostly for its tombs?)**

**but that glimpse of sanity
in the Middle Kingdom
that brief moment between
sacrifice of living creatures**

**and arrogant monotheism,
long morning-after nightmare.
How to get back there and take
soundings of the Nile inside**

blood-borne pathogens our crocodiles.

18 August 2013

A PEN

Writes well but doesn't remember.

A case of God

guessed again in rhyme.

The arrogance of prophecy,

this bleak Jerusalem/

2.

I hurry there to open

I swing on the gate

like a child.

Being a child

of the people—

so every room's a sanctuary

every vacant lot the *Pardes*

every mealy apple a heathen mystery.

3.

Tell the Tarot

what it's thinking.

Sink into the soft flesh

where it is least experienced,

the pale skin of Eden.

And suddenly nothing

is all that far away.

4.

The arrogance of me

saying even this.

Loving so oddly and so much.

Forgive me

by reading it.

18 August 2013

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**Dense miracles of English prose
children under the oak tree
nibbling bitter acorns on a dare.**

**The whole business is a dare,
Browne and Borrow, Vaughan and Swift,
trying to make the language fit
the infinite complexity of what we think**

**inside the quiet tumult of the senses,
supernatural beauty of the natural world.**

18 August 2013

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Make things happen

to be again.

Low lingering

a log on the lawn.

What wood

wants to become.

There is something dry in us

that lets us be a while,

not wash away, this dry element,

brief hint of an identity.

18 August 2013

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**Hand held out to stop a Caesar
mosaics in a churchy hall**

seek the woman who would answer me

**so much tumbles out of dream
tomorrow for instance**

all then is packed in now.

18 August 2013

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**If the words are still in it
the pen will say
more than the heart can
and lots more than it knows.**

18 August 2013