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So the mercy was there all the time
wadded in each leaf, maple, alder,
oak, made no difference. Look
intently at this leaf and be healed.

Who would believe such a medic
but many did and many were cured.
But not cured of looking intently.
And none of them cured of leaves.

26 December 2013

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Renting real estate on Mars.
Smaller planet lighter gravity
I will leap up my God. Hope
is my middle name, or would be
if I were a woman but I'm not.
But still the russet acres of
my new home planet beckon—
here it's all blue and green and war,
maybe by opposites the Red
Planet will meditate in calm.
There's Hope again, that tricky
lady of a certain age who yearns
for a whole world to beat peace.

26 December 2013

THE BROOM

A broom removes.
With this in hand
a thousand errors
and blunders disappear.
With this very broom
Florentines swept all
one rare snowfall's snow
all together in one heap
in the courtyard Christmas
morning so Michelangelo
could shape it to a statue—
his lostest work, left only
traces now in eyes of men
and courtiers dead five
hundred years. And on this
broom my Cousin Sally sailed
around her room when young
and later round all the world
from asylum to asylum till
she took off past the ecliptic

and was gone. But still
I hear her talk some nights
when I push the broom
around the kitchen, whispers
of straw hushed on straw
are how she lets me know
the power in soft hands—
but I let it rest. A broom
is at its best leaning upright
where two walls connect—
they call that a corner now
but it is something more. Just
like the broom himself,
that rod of cleansing, that staff
of instruction and correction.
And Sally's shadow passes
between me and the fluorescent,
her words are calm and terrible,
they tell me all the things
a broom can do and all the places
you can ride them to and be gone.

26 December 2013

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Sport of servery
as if a forest of tradesmen
had swallowed him

and no avail.
All he had to do
was do.

It's not easy
when one is not one
but everyone.

And yet to do
was done. A man
existed. Time

insisted. It has come.

27 December 2013

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Hurt

lingers in the afterday,
childbed confessions

newborn escapee:
You think it was dark
where I was?

No I lived in splendor
long discourse of body-light
from which I tumbled

(and the squeeze of it
offends me still)
into this dim world.

27 December 2013

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A buzz
from far away
on angry telephones
mad at someone else
for once not me—
could any sound be natural?
Isn't sound
a man-made thing.
even birds learn from us
desperate to tell us things.
And the waves of the sea
learn language too.
And God is the noise of us.

27 December 2013

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Because of this
a new anxiety
stile over a three
railed fence
to find the bull field
bare, a set of
shadows vexing thee,
so much to see.
Rock random weed.

27 December 2013

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O evening
glimmer is
still possible
no rent
due to dark.

27 December 2013

THE CAT

The cat clinging
to the screen porch screen
is your past life.

Enough of it to hurt
or even it feels
to kill. The screen
is how you see.

You can't sleep
anymore because
you have too much past
choking your lungs.

Too many people
are behind you. the cat
is every one of these,
the cat.

The wives the wants
the folks the feuds
all grey and black
striped, so normal,
so many, kind
of crazy eyes,

quiet. a mix
of mild and name,
so many names
all of them lost,
you can't remember
or the last thing
you want to do
is remember,
you are danted
by every animal, tamed
by everyone you
ever met. Sat
slept ate fought with.
The screen porch
is your head,
broken into tiny squares
of failure and reproach,
like pixels on decent
screen, not this gaunt
old thing a decade gone.
Gone with all your days
into the choke of you
now, the crawl, the breath

in the middle of the night
hurts. The screen porch
is your head, nothing
is outside and inside
you'll never know.

This porch has
no house
to stand beside it.

The cat clings
and gives voice
to what it must
and looks at you,
you worry about
its poor claws
stuck in wire mesh,
it reassures you
it can retract them
at any moment
and fall away
but can you?

28 December 2013

1. A dream reading from last night's bitter sleep.
2. Gavin Douglas says "danter of horses" to translate *hippodamos*. So dant means 'to tame.'

THE AIR OF TREES

Or the air in trees. Or the air between trees. What I mean is this. When, even in late morning, and certainly in early morning and any evening, you look at, look in, just pass by recent forest, the saplings all crowding together, close as friends, too close for people to walk two abreast between, at those times and in those sights there seems to be a special kind of air between, among the trees. Something very different from the air all round. The young trees are talking— soft chatter of the nursery, is it? And I remember how places that raise plants for sale are called nurseries, and I realize that I'm not the only one who has heard, perhaps subconsciously, the talk of young trees made manifest as this strange thick, vague, almost viscous air among the maple saplings.

Now I want to know what this air is. With calm hand at the back of my mind I hold Novalis by his hand, and I ask, and I ask Ruskin how his thinking feels in this strange light of trees, or is it dark made pale by so much talk, and from across the room I bow to Goethe and ask his

judgment on such airs. Hush, he says, your eyes have hands that tell you true. Wave, wave between the trees, wave and swerve and let them see, for you are of this language too, he said.

28 December 2013

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A word
worth waiting for.

Good morning child
we speak again
after 400
of your years
ten minutes back
for me in my cabin
by the sea.

Good morning

Sir, I dare respond,
having no words to say
but what you gave me,
the best word
takes a whole life to say.

29 December 2013.

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Did I end where I should have begun?

The longer an object rolls
the more its own mass
determines speed and direction.

The longer I say a thing
the more it's me,
the less it's it.

29 December 2013.

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Given permission
not to understand
the words I say

is offering
bread to the hungry
ghosts the children
of so barren a mother
the fears that roam
my morning lawn.

29 December 2013.

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I need to fit new
bodies to these
few names I live by

29 December 2013.

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Waiting somewhere
for a dance to begin —
so many words!
Crows chase a hawk —
sky free over the pines.
Dark in the wood
as if to explain me at last.

29 December 2015.

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Be all times
one and now
now we can be.

29.XII.2013