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Knowing something again to want  
 something from you but what I don't know  
 there are so many to be simple again  
 after all the numbers one lying quiet there  
 where the light comes down a stranger  
 in your clothes I need to know the rigor  
 of understanding so rare the soft urgency  
 not even knowing what there is to know  
 prediction breaks blond hours elapsing  
 the snow never stops

or because a sentinel  
 strands conscience at the doorway  
 yard stretching out sunrise the invisible  
 excites me to demand something of you  
 from you it comes with the morning knowing  
 what it is what it for its own sake  
 wants to be wanted what  
 harsh profession necessity

argues more

the snow stops of course things do  
*exeunt in mysterium* vanish also in not knowing  
but not knowing is also a way of singing  
hymned to some deep part of even you  
I wander the cold numbers all the way to.

5 February 2011

## AUTORITRATTO

Learning to answer the question  
being loud—these skills  
imported from childhood  
like olive oil from a lesser Greek island  
are all I have to go outdoors with,  
Snug in my lair I lie listening.

5 February 2011

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Stand before the candle flame  
until your shadow  
dissolves in that small fire.  
You are free now certainly  
like a lizard on sandstone, morning.

5 February 2011

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So many things I asked of myself's world  
a mirror a grapevine a millstream  
cliffed over a turbid river a cup  
to drink water you once saw yourself reflected in  
thus a marriage of sorts an equipoise of energy  
old white horse browsing in a neighbor's field  
a stone wall a rosary with every bead  
a different shape and color different  
substance a calendar a wolf and all  
of them came true the way things  
left to themselves naturally do  
and even the pilgrim falcon he's here too.

5 February 2011

**MOSTLY WANTING NOT DECLARING**

agencies of renewal all the layering  
lingers wanting it all  
nervous peachtrees Brooklyn winter  
burlap-wrapped with sticky fingers  
understood the masque of time  
no solid body in there her  
skin against the amber pressed  
and the fig trees of Berkeley stood  
naked before (there is no time  
there is only space how long  
the hallway is) as if the usufruct  
of all space she was lifted into the morning  
act of devotion first taste of the world  
no more as if no more what is remembered  
the real is never remembered  
telling stories keeps the snow away  
the bears of Barrytown listen in small dens  
where will I find my slip of slate  
to reckon my sums because waiting is now  
where is the syenite smooth of the Queen's lap  
warm Nile no more questions  
the real is over no more proposition  
palm trees exclusively and wet shoes  
and a cup that comes apart in your hands  
but the milk holds its shape lifts

itself to your lips    the way things do  
being anxious    in your intelligence  
the light switch    the twirling Dervish  
I feel the afterimage    of your skin  
she lay down on the window sill    said  
write on this    no more memory  
no more past    nothing more to come  
forget what you thought    you meant  
and only mean now    what I was saying?  
no more pronouns    no more personas.

5 February 2011



## THE GENRE OF IT

What can I call it, not an epic for it is not verse, not a saga for it has no family, what can I call it, *a logic*? The long logic of the Christian tradition, from Paul to Charles Williams—it makes a great, vast, poem (but not in verse, not an epic), a poem by thousands of voices whispered or shouted into place, voices subsumed into one complex structure, a story you can tell a child in ten minutes or spend your whole life decoding. (So too there is the logic of the Buddha, the logic of Abraham.)

All those poets, grumpy theologians, ecstatic visionaries, scholastic summers-up, heretics, lunatics, quietudinous sages, all of them drawn by the immeasurable gravitational field of the Incarnate One into speaking the poem onward. A cathedral built of voice and image and time.

6 February 2011

## WELFARE

Welfare is waiting    glass architect  
box the poor    rat them in nests  
Stalin showed the way    smite everyone  
into small    clefts in hugeness  
till they die to themselves    we do  
to the poor    how can we even speak  
the agent of desire    the broken sun  
pavement snow    no forgiveness  
till we do not do    then it all comes back.

6 February 2011

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The agreeable mind of a purple window  
lures the lover into gaunt chapels  
(why does lover always look like male  
can't she love me too and strive?)  
there they sit together or apart  
attuned by colored light  
the oldest trick of all  
gasping down from heaven  
they have a thought they share  
God help them now  
sharing is fatal, its quality  
haunts their heart's throat—  
blue thunder  
from the other window  
God send a little yellow  
sense in their red minds.

6 February 2011

## CONVERSION

Call me spirit nautch  
respond in me the thoughtful  
carapace on high we dance  
those am of us who do  
do so hoodoo  
to break through it is from a time  
behind you the store room  
where the noises are at night  
did the cat get in or who  
is it you take off your shoes  
shine the teakwood better gloss  
of us is some dance too  
my zombie partner her oafish mate  
change religions the way you change shirts  
nothing is left of faith but color  
but if you have done well then color  
lasts in the mind or as the mind.

6 February 2011

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Find the word  
to let it find me  
two deer  
on a white hill  
just like France  
but here  
eleven wild  
turkeys walking  
on the snow  
up the ridge  
stop to dance  
six of them  
in a whirl of circles  
fight or mating  
then they climb  
into the trees  
only two colors  
white and other  
that strange familiar  
not-grey not-brown  
the woods take on  
try to name it  
the animals are gone.

7 February 2011

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Do I know enough to give you a picture  
of it? No. Or a pattern in the snow,  
can I read it as speaking to the both of us  
something we can learn from, or go  
further in our shapely lives to find the form  
their shapes and our own seem to imply?  
To trust without knowing. Like a bird the air.

7 February 2011

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These sounds are Berlioz  
speaking the language of art  
in the land of the dead. Why  
are we listening only  
to the sound of the sound,  
why not the hidden melody  
of what the dead are  
always saying to the living  
or whoever we think we are?

8 February 2011

= = = = =

But are they waiting?

They wear ordinary clothes

jeans mostly sometimes

a skirt, they drink herbal tea

bent over their laptops

and the world changes.

Only for me. How can they be

so powerful, like music.

They are letters from home,

that comfy parlor in twilight

where I have never been.

But where unknown to us all

they are waiting for me.

8 February 2011