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THE NIGHTINGALE

in the little scented garden in Yvoire
sings for the blind.

The lake beyond
soothes us on the way to Switzerland—
old ferryboats are best

old, with shiny engines on view
the great pistons moving,
part of our journey to admire them
gleaming red and brass and all the lake
sparkle. But the blind
see only the nightingale,
see the smell of lavender, bee balm,
clean motor oil, the gull cries,
the ghost of Pontius Pilate
explaining history in yet another different way.

22 January 2013

=====

**In this place I lost my memory
please give it back when you find it**

**I was gazing at the bare belly of the waitress
trying to understand the menu she was reciting**

**then I blinked and found myself alone
on a park bench in Seattle**

**everywhere I looked were mountains
and seas all mixed together.**

**It is never easy to believe the senses,
we're smart enough to doubt the clearest thing—**

**I heard a cow lowing on the meadow
behind me improbably. And I saw**

**a great and beautiful lady
walking through the clouds en dishabille.**

**It is not easy to be me, granted,
but I should be able to tell past from future**

at least, easy as telling front from back

but it just isn't so. In fact

nothing is so. So there I sat

a mere amateur of the weather

wondering whether whatever it is

has happened already, and here I am?

22 January 2013

=====

**Give the wind a name
the way the Romans did
it will help you to rule all space
the way the Romans did**

**all your roads will get there
your temples will have real
gods in them, shimmering
in the civilized atmosphere—**

**all power from the names!
Piano on the radio, unfamiliar,
I guess Schumann, feel it
happy and far away and sad,**

**did you ever wake up knowing
this is still the Roman Empire
after all, nothing changes,
only money from hand to hand,**

**the hidden emperor lost
in imagery, turns out to be Schubert
and I know nothing of the roads
but all of them still take us home.**

22 January 2013

=====

**I see my own shadow
running up the road
while I sit here.
It's hard to be a heathen
in this Abrahamic land
all super-ego and big cars.
Maybe it wasn't my shadow
that tastes of maple syrup,
maybe it was a yearling deer
came for our cracked corn,
ate some and pleased and fled.**

22 January 2013

=====

**Pause between
movements of the concerto
the clarinetist breathes
a few seconds like an ordinary
woman and it seems the whole
orld breathes with her too.**

22 January 2013

FRAGMENTS OF PAGAN HYMNODY

1.

**Let the Mondays of the meek
use Tues's anger to repel
the form of norm. The
norm of form. Spring
thirsty through each dry day
until the need for new
be sated never.**

2.

**Let the so-called week
hurtle forward never back
no week no vici no vicar
no wheel.**

Lo!

it is tomorrow before it is today.

3.

**Weeks are wimps.
Months at least
happen in the sky, Hi,**

Luna! Khaire

Selanna!

And years

come around us

uncontrollable

we do what we can

to master it by abstractions

Kant Fichte Hegel, you know the tune,

open any book and find their traces.

Aiee, my children,

good grammar is as close

as I'll ever come to morality!

4.

Could

they be hymns whom

the gods gave to sing

this me?

And when it is to praise

am I praising them,

those psyches of lightning of cedar of honey of waterfall

or praising me

by not so subtle

confusion of self with deity

since no one else is there?

5.

**O yes I mean it
how I mean it
this common book of prayer
I lift above my head
to shield me from the ordinary
sun so I can see the one
hidden in her eyes.**

6.

**Soon we will be able
to listen
to what the stone says**

**it is a northern country
where everything talks
except for human men**

**who nurse their silence
while the wind speaks
ice cracks jokes beneath their feet.**

7.

Rabbit tracks in snow
fox tracks and once
mountain lion by the stream—
o gods of earth and heaven
what wonders you teach
us to read when we
dare to look down.

8.

Away from that kindly despot in the sky
the golden girl the one who thinks
she is the only one there is...

9.

I was just getting started
when the breath went home
I follow it now
down into the ground

10.

winter trees in sunlight
thick brown bed they rise from

**a hundred years of their own leaves
and every one of them
written with your name,
all of your names
written so clearly
in the original alphabet
the one we read best with closed eyes.**

11.

**The harp was an easy idea
so we made a lot of them
taught all our children to play them
those who could carry a tune
and those others, tone-blind ones,
they are worth music too,
have thumbs to strum, fingers to pluck
and you have made us smart enough
o gods of wind and water to hear
all that sound as beauty, a word we
are just beginning to comprehend.**

12.

Chestnut slippery shells

hot from the fire smooth as glass

how did we learn to eat things

make things build things

is it all by ourselves we did it

in a usable world or did you

Pramantha twirl your fire-stick

until we finally got the idea,

friction, pressure, heat and sweat

and things leap into form

then learn to leave things alone?

13.

We listen

as hard as we can

hard heard

we slowly learn

all your names

more slowly still

learn to say them

quietly out loud

on top of the hill.

14.

**There is only one mountain
the one we build
from logs and bricks**

**our effort is the god of it
and talks to the other gods
up there and all around**

**and the crows fly away
laughing at us
the way they do**

**kindly knowing
even we might
one day get it right.**

23 January 2013

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(answering Alana)

**If I am your soul
you have no alone
Only no one ever is**

23.I.13

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**The waking body
in which the shy
 pornosophists
 are content to dream**

**is somehow actual.
This is weird, that is,
is fate, the Wyrd
of your becoming,**

**what will come,
what will become of you
when only dream
is left behind to tell.**

24 January 2013

VENCE

**Maniple a sleeve
on a sleeve. Alb
a white you take off
and put back on.**

**A chasuble
a house of silk.**

**Matisse made them
for his chapel,
too heavy for the priests
to wear, replicated
in rayon later,
the walls are still his
walls, the light
comes through
his windows still
unmediated by
the weakness of
who we are.**

**Once there were giants
among men, even priests
who could bear the weight,
spiderwebs on their shoulders
all those passionate colors.
And long before them**

**men could stand naked
as Francis or Milarepa
and lift a cup of thanks
up to mindfulness alone.**

24 January 2013

DIX-NEUVIEME*a notation*

**Arrondissement and century
the great Nineteenth.
Schumann and the Buttes-Chaumont
Wagner, Hummel, Raff,
Schubert, Beethoven.
Beethoven. This is my
arrondissement, beauty
heaped high out of spoiled
emotions, sickness, syphilis.
Buttes-Chaumont were built
on the hugest garbage dump
in northeast Paris—
these hills, this music, these
stone-log steps, duckpond,
Gounod, Chopin,
symphony, Liszt, Bruckner,
all this music is
the outer voice of alchemy—
the science Paris bred
all through the century,
Nerval, Eliphas Lévi, down**

**through Huysmans, Mallarmé,
stages of the work,
the one Great Work,
turning the filth of the emotions
into purer happening.
Climb this city mountain
now, children skittering
on the ancientest science.**

24 January 2013