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Some things being glad about
also are of feather
helical fall on snow
sweet apparitions of course
(organdy with satin tie-backs)
lucid as a Harley and the engine
cut. Australian peace
it has been called, or primal
weather, nothing happening
at all, just weather.
And when you do come
it may be I'll be gone
before you or be sleeping only
bee-serenaded in a monk's
garden, my drowsy heart
excited by the hum of distant
traffic, love me as well
as you can he said and went
on sleeping. On a rustic
table at his elbow he had
left for us the crooked key
that is the only thing we need.

17 February 2009

POLITEIA

Soft behavior is another kind
of kingdom and enough for us—
freedom is so paltry sometimes
if you pay for it with blood.
Time's my only money and my love.

17 February 2009

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Transport waking. Green
around the corner – bleak
autumn leaves on March's
tree but all too soon.
The wind has almost
done with them, a treaty
between two kingdoms
that we sign and sign again.
Who is the hooded witness?
All I'm sure of these days
is the shadows of a couple crows
swift over the slick old snow.

17 February 2009

THE SECRET OF OEDIPUS

A man
is the space between
two women,
a space
made to speak.

(A man's body is made up of the *molecules of between*,
no substance, just a ceaseless approximation of motion.)

17 February 2009

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Amongst us all
he sang and the windows
listened, what
could air do but transmit
these ordinary ecstasies
of human speech?

He sang and the wood
resounded, plaster
sifted in its long
long drying and kept still,

a voice in a house
is a godly thing

a things a house is
always waiting for

no matter who
says or sings, no
matter what is said.
Any word is word enough.

18 February 2009

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To be alone
as none

in a world
where music is

19.II.09

WITH A LINE BY PAUL BLACKBURN

Such things as a hawk
can remember when he plummets
fierce onto some small life
down here of what he knew
up there serene riding on warm
currents of the hungry light

the quiet vigilant desperation
“that looks so beautiful”
to us to whom it’s given to stand
but never ride on our own
nature above the world.
Every animal envies every other.

How we skill. How we kill.

19 February 2009

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A lap's symmetry
enough to tell

that wishing well
among the mountains

voices in the valley
that tell us to be.

19 February 2009

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Of course something
else could say it
but it is the brawn of music
grabs your hips and makes
something happen
that hurts the floor
or makes it cry out
your body moving
I believe in this god
spelled with the same
letters that spell
my clumsy name too.

19 February 2009

HARD WEATHER TO HOPE

1.

Filter, the cloud does filter
what someone said.
Nobody you know, American,
up there. A different
radiator. A better car.
Apollo of the dark street.
Apollo of the crowded bar.

2.

Because divinity expresses
itself in the curve of a breast
or the shallow hillock
of haunch, a presence
in the eye, a gaunt shadow
under the cheekbone
a sense that everything matters
but not all that much.
As if everything that we see
could be taken right off
and we'd see another thing
altogether splendidly different.
And then like Eleusis we'd
know the laugh that death is.

3.

The key is different. It falls
from every hand, gets lost
in the snow by the doorsill.
Dig it out, sing to it a cold
little silvery song or brassy
song to fetch it up again
into your freezing fingers.
How patient the door is!
You realize at last that time
itself is made of wood.

20 February 2009

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No trouble at all
he said and the sun
came out and Saab
went bankrupt a snow
plow snarled outside
and among all the red
tulips on the table
one yellow wilted.
What can an honest
man make of all this?

20 February 2009

SANDALWOOD HOUR

1.

They were carrying away the carrying away
the car itself was on the wing, the way
was away, away was always a way, and they
were carrying carrying away, away so far
that everything turned into only being here
everywhere was here and that's a fact
a knife stabbed into week-old cracking bread.

2.

Another semaphore was scent. A hand
so placed along the left side of your jaw
that the thumb was in your mouth. Your mouth
became the law. I tasted and obeyed
with mine. When you kiss someone you
taste the smell. When you touch you feel
your own skin in a new way. This way
of feeling your own skin as away. The way
is always away. You smelled that way before.

20 February 2009, Hopson

JUDGMENT

I am looking up at the painting
of the Last Judgment. Tarot trump
not the usual image in an apse
of the good going up and the bad
hurtling down. Here we all are,
rising from our graves, naked
and rather beautiful. A naked
angel – didn't know they could be
but here (s)he is – is fingering
a long silver shawm or gyaling
or some such noise-making thing.
We wake and hurry up out
of the ground, out of our garments,
we stand wide-eyed, aroused,
looking at one another with love
all eager to start the story up
again. Our graves were deep
but neat, we step out clean,
our skin looks like sunlight
on the shallow sea. How well
painted we are. It means
that everything inside us must
come out, summoned by the long
chemistry of love, or maybe

it's just the right time, time
is a chemical too, isotopes of
chronos quaver in our neurons
wake, wake up! And everything
that's buried in each thing
must come forth from that thing
and be naked and particular
and healed, has to lazarus out
and move among all the rest.
It means. It shows us coming
up and coming out, it is so bright
because the inwards of the light
itself pour out and the insides
of the air breathe out too
till nothing is left unsaid.
The angel drops her instrument
and speaks a word – the whole
picture paints the word she says.

20 February 2009

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An expedition into the uplands
of starlight, where the dark
avenues run between the boulevards
of light, those bourgeois from which
we try all our lives to escape deep
into the sidestreets of obscurity
where all the beginnings lie hidden.

20 February 2009

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1.

No nude messages.

The old woolen gospels
are about to bleat in.

Shear them. Linger each
to one syllable down
then swallow it. There.

Everything that has ever
been said is inside you now,
Leibniz, Maupassant, Li Po,
you don't have to do a thing.

Least of all think.

Leave thinking to your
betters, those hotshot neurons
flashing around your cerebrum.
And not just there.

We think all through our bodies,
which is why every I needs you.

2.

Delete that love stuff. Yet
we think all through our bodies
means I use yours
to think with too,

I don't just live in me.
No more do you in you.
That's why it's frightening
sometimes to be.
Knowing has no private skin.
And being is unstable,
arguments, full of oranges and apes.

3.
Come back inside where thinking
saves us from what just was thought.
Seafoam, I meant. What happens
to thinking when it's done.
A book, a scar on the public mind.
A kiss that won't let go.

21 February 2009

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So I want to be a great poet
the way Whitman was,
hurting no one, sitting
on his chair writing
great poems
never forgetting he was a man
who walked around on earth
alone, commissioned
to make if anything
heaven here.

21 February 2009

[towards a Farley Crawford photo]

I remember it so well because it's so hard to see—

mind's eye but even then the wall aloned it
from mist a small boat lifts its prow
and was coming towards me. A boat
on the Hudson. The dying Hamilton
aboard, bleeding all over his white shirt.
The dying American republic, religions
that try to reign over us, the emperors
of ordinary money. The mist. River
carrying away all our false starts,
bleak beginnings. Dead beavers' fur.

And two live ones on the pond the Sawkill makes
behind my house, reed-congested recent years
the little river squeezed between the weeds, dam,
the falls come next. The face of a boat
from out of memory comes, out of your mist
and tells me this: When I try to remember what I saw
what I really feel is the power of seeing it. Of seeing.

21 February 2009