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WANTING

The time had come when what he wanted was so specialized, so rare, that the feeling of pressure slowly mounting in him towards getting it, having it, hardly felt like desire at all. More like anxiety or asthma or fear of some uncommon disease you'd read about in a magazine while waiting for something else.

What a man wants could kill him if he doesn't get it, if he doesn't even let himself really know he wants it, just lets the want grow in him the way sinister things grow in unseen place.

So he went, with his last remaining insight, to see a man also called doctor, and said Doctor, what do I want?

That was at least a good question, a start. But the doctor, unaccustomed to answering, changed the subject helpfully, and asked some other question in reply, the way such doctors do. So the man died.

5 March 2008

THE TOLL BOOTH

A car drives into the toll booth and stops. A man and a woman get out of their car and walk to the café. The man looks back at the car, as if checking it, the car is full of stuff, he looks away. As soon as the couple is in the café, seen through the window standing at the counter, ordering food, being served, sitting down, another couple stands up and leaves the café, walks in the rain (it is raining now) to the first couple's car, gets in and drives away. I watch all this from a sheltered doorway. It happens over and over. sometimes couples, sometimes families, sometimes a man or woman alone. There is no symmetry between the number of occupants who leave the car and the number of the newcomers who drive it away. I don't really understand what I'm seeing. And there is no one in the toll booth I can ask.

5 March 2008

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Let this be one

word then another

Kabyle winter red rock under
snow the Atlas who

are you keeping
warm now? Tbencem Yiy.
Waltywa, anist.

These rocks are my mother
as who would

say. Let this
be another.

There, that is alone.
That is together with itself

at last. Divorce the air.

6 March 2008

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Or the other. So much waiting.
Smoke from a rock. A rock.
Acid air, a trench of friends.
And. And is the only song.

6 March 2008

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Time to measure time.
A crime. Time
to remember forgetting

and then forget it again,
the window. The one.

There is only always
one at the window.
Don't you understand
it doesn't care
who stands before it?

Looking in or looking out,
showing oneself or only seeking
a self to know,
it doesn't matter
to the window, doesn't
matter even to the glass,

itself, a glass
is not a window,
a hole in the wind
is a window

an eye that sees everything.
There is nowhere to hide.
I who married
so many doors
have been betrayed
by a single window.

Stand there.
Let me see you
again.

7 March 2008

ONE MORE ROMEO & JULIET

What she always wanted was to stand at the window and show her breasts to whomever might be walking in the street below.

He was walking in the street.

What he always wanted was for some girl to stand at a window and lift her skirt and show him her secret place.

He looked up at the window and there was a girl there.

She looked down and saw a boy passing.

She smiled down at him. He smiled up at her.

Sometimes a smile is like a knife in the heart. Still bleeding from her smile, he walked on.

7 March 2008

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As if the opposite were the case
and of course it is, it always is
as with a white-flesh fish – haddock
maybe or hake – there is a shimmer
of not quite cooked translucency
just before the moment called It's done
and then it is – a partridge fluttering
under a Bavarian bush, a hen
walking on a Schleswig heath,
we all belong somehow to the Danes
and then they let us go, Canute,
Hamlet, Kierkegaard, no church
without its yew, no yew
without those tiny scarlet fruits
said to be poisonous but who knows.
Who ever knows?

7 March 2008

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Is it too hard to know
the thing the one
sound came from his mouth
what was it what
could it be what could
a thing be at all
and he could say it?

not right not wrong
a thing of its own
like a star or a lump of coal
made of stuff
you don't know

do you? what kind
of book or man
would tell you that?
a wolf or a dog
you have to guess

a word is a wet lie
in my mouth
love me just the same
as I do you,
do it, for god's sake
do it to us both.

7 March 2008

THE APPROACH

Walking towards it
the way Zeno would have the mind
move towards its target always
a fingertip ahead of who one actually is

as in a chasm (the Gorge du Diable
where the foothills fall towards Geneva
say) one finds in the rock wall
glistening with the secret moisture

the earth always seems to brew inside,
a gleet or sap so thin we drink it
or we die, a small pale cyclamen
growing in a cranny

and this flower is to make one think
or just makes one think
the whole point of the arduous descent
or the huge clamber of the Alps themselves

is just to induce the traveler's eye
to light upon this observation
and be content for that split second
before the hectic guide chivvies one up the path

towards the ordinary surface of things
up there where the things are
in their myriads, one color after
another till at last they let one sleep.

8 March 2008

TEACH YOURSELF IRISH

Where did the language go I thought I was learning?
It was there when the rain began and gone when it had gone
leaving gleaming wet roads and a silence in my thought
only the throat of a far-off woman could fill
spilling out some euphonious gibberish for me to solve.
Hearing the weather as language. Answering.

8 March 2008

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When we hear it
it is because

and not listening, the tune
never answers

when you listen, only
when the mind goes

off on its own business,
scuba in shadows.

8 March 2008

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But listen also
to this silence
I try to bring
love right now.

8 III 08

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Orion. Ready again.
Stretched over us
looking down, reading
us again. Nothing to do
but wonder up at it—
the rest is measurement.

8 III 08

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Trying to find
and not even losing.

8 III 08

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as if a lark were over
and it isn't or
something thrush
in neighbor bushes
said or we heard

what passes
as music: then!

9 March 2008

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Could it or can't it wait
another year or two
the way Easter has to wait
His whole life before He dies
His way to it, cross, ladder,
tomb, stone, idling angel,
Mary after Mary happen by
trying to take hold? Life
before resurrection. What
is incarnate when he comes
again, disguised as you
or me and we'll be the last
to know the man we boy
or girl of us suddenly are?

9 March 2008

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This is not theology
it is social work,
 the we identity
we keep losing keep finding
in other people's eyes
the interminable love story
leads us through the rocks
and maybe home—
as if we ever left.

9 March 2008

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The drowned earth
slowly drinks

lake everywhere
shimmers in first sun

minnesota my poor lawn.

9 III 08