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There was a time when all I had to do  
was make things up and think them all day long.  
This is called childhood.

There was a time when all I had to do  
is make things up and write them down.  
This is called being a man.

A time will come when all I have to do  
is believe the things that I wrote down.  
This is what is called dying.

16 March 2008

## PLACE KNOWS

Cancellation of a house  
by gravity alone. East  
Fifty-first street we put  
too much place in a place

and it falls through. Crane  
topples, house is crushed.  
People die. Place  
is beginning to fight back.

Real Estate did this. Kills.  
Place knows how many  
people there can be in place  
before place runs out

and the horror starts to fall.

16 March 2008

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The sly insertions, the preacher  
bobbing at his flock  
a bird too ominous—

the children sleep  
safe in the elsewhere of their minds.

16 March 2008

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Forgive me Lord for thinking  
I know better than two  
thousand years of churchmen  
but I do. Palm Sunday maybe  
and God is great when to think so  
makes you take care of the world  
and love everyone in it  
and only then, Cold  
for the season but no snow.

16 March 2008  
West Roxbury

= = = = =

City dawns seldom spectacular  
more a sigh of relief  
that the fierce dark thing is gone

breathed out like a frightened  
breath held in too long  
and the sea light sweeps simple in.

17 March 2008  
Boston

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One little idea—  
crack it  
and get the nutmeat of nonsense out  
and chew it  
long and sweet.

Nonsense nourishes.  
Nonsense leads away,  
When you've gotten  
as far away as there is  
you might finally be here.

17 March 2008  
Boston

= = = = =

Lift the wood and fuse it to the house.  
Porches. Porticoes. Verandas  
round my bungalow, steep woods  
round Tiger Hill and then  
every place I've ever been  
becomes my only house.  
And there I live beneath the mountain  
right here between my ears.

17 March 2008  
Boston

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Every dawn is Mount Kanchenjunga  
A pretty girl taking out the trash.

17 III 08, Boston

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Car alarm  
mystery of neighborhoods  
how we do and how we don't

sunshine in bare trees  
though yesterday a pussy willow  
beginning its primordial performance

making my fingertips a child again.

17 March 2008  
Boston

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Wolf child for real  
we all are.

A mistake  
makes me  
at your door

suddenly it's complete  
the house closes  
on the trapped

Beware of noticing

\* \* \*

Emblems instead of emotions  
(emoticons as old as the Cross)

unfelt sincerities

quiet empty streets.

18 March 2008

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The voice is spilled of its images.  
The child cries at the door  
that everything is. Everything  
doesn't open anymore.

18 March 2008

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Ester    Astarte    A star.    True.

She had no king.  
She is the twin of the sky.  
Her real name is The Light.

18 March 2008  
(to H.S.B., who asked)

## PLAINT FOR THE FEAST OF SAINT JOSEPH 2008

I've never been a husband in that sense  
stand around watch some baby grow  
into a manhood he could share with me  
pivoting on the same mysterious woman  
no one would ever know except by her effect,

him again, the infant uttered into the world  
as if he had some big news to declare.  
So Joseph also is a mystery I stumble on  
year after year at this season, *a day  
before spring, a day after winter*  
someone stands at the edge of the picture  
fiddling with some wood. Everything  
is ready to begin. Hide the nails.

Dear one, I am astonished at my  
temerity. I want to be the one who has been  
born. I want you to have been my father,  
a father further than God.

19 March 2008

= = = = =

So silent in herself  
like time itself he thought  
suddenly there or suddenly gone  
he thought what could be the matter  
who were the pilgrims who dared to bring

this woman to this place in me  
so that I could never forget  
he asked always guessing at somebody  
crouching inside time and driving forward  
that bitter engine through the world

smiling even in her little cockpit  
like a kid on a tricycle he thought  
mowing down centuries of bleeding men.

Of when he was and would be one  
he thought his only dignity being  
to be and to be as silent as she.

19 March 2008

= = = = =

But Joseph. Again the spring.  
As if he willed it  
and we're grateful  
for what he lets the animals do,

the ones we shear and milk and eat.  
Because he was a carpenter  
he built a door in the world  
and let the sun through.

We get all giddy at that,  
touch one another and say people's names  
and love them, marry them, mourn them  
when they leave the room, crying their names.

But the secret name of everybody else is Joseph.  
He is the man in the picture  
who nails the picture to the wall.  
He holds time open so some strange Man sneaks through.

19 March 2008

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So the equinox, the feast  
among Italians  
is Joseph.

Southern ones

I grew up with,  
everybody walking in the street  
knew all about *The Golden Bough*  
inside himself, parades, fertilities,  
the green man, cauldrons, girls in satin.

And this silent man with whiskers  
has brought the warm days back I thought.  
Don't worry about time, seasons,  
touch the satin, say the girl's name.

Welcome her into your wrought iron garden  
and feed her those nourishing fried things  
they call by some weird Sicilian name  
but you call Spring is here.

Who really are you, Joseph?

19 March 2008

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But anyone was because of me aren't you?  
I wanted the jawline clean as a harp  
the lips were Egypt certainly the neck  
is a pale name in English and I lick.

Confession time. I luck. The face  
after all these centuries comes back  
and sees me hard. The park the poem  
the old days the Queens afternoons

imagine me. Again the luck of what  
after all the all is you again at last  
for the first time now. So long before.  
Birth isn't everything time isn't

everything is it a beginning is never.  
It always was. Is. That's the luck part  
I lick you too understand the mouth  
is the meaning of everything it says.

20 March 2008

## (WINDOWS)

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.

You stand there  
you let me see you

don't you understand  
that 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 every single window.

(7 March 2008)  
revised 20 March 2008

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It always seems close enough then it's gone,  
the park in Queens you could listen to the roses grow  
and why do pretty women always play the flute

who do lakes dry up and why does morning come?  
A broken arrow lies on the shore, speedwell's  
they say a flower. Catch up and fall down.  
Watch the amaryllis blossom again and thank God.

20 March 2008

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When all the music plays at once  
it's worth picking up the telephone.  
In this furniture a wine is stored  
inestimable auction value. What i  
don't drink another will  
o'er my dry bones. Bamboo  
almost eternal in its little paddy,  
a pond's thing men make to  
keep the ocean in, piece by piece  
the quantities. The woman  
who keeps trying to let you go.  
Let the sky fall into my sleep,  
sleep on my back and gulp down  
the sky and all its birds and trees,  
the sky through branches is my sky.

20 March 2008

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Exactly enough to measure the coefficient of normality  
by which the broken edges of Saint Somebody's reliquary  
scratch the poor priest saying his dawn Mass and he  
could be any one of us, girl or not the swift rebuttal,  
the answer no one knew – raise your hand and leave the room  
we are the partners of midnight and a cry

And then another thing a whistle with no tune a tune  
with no words a word with no meaning a meaning  
with no one to mean it no one to mourn the absence  
becomes nobody is gone nobody is here  
silence has a population of its own

Bach's birthday and Matthew's Passion plays  
because it's Good Friday also is a mathematical expression  
cancelling out a certain sickness of humanity  
and making the human rise a morning or so from now  
into an inexpressible Difference if and only if.

21 March 2008