

2-2007

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Always staying to the knot  
a rock. A rock is mostly  
something guessed not found.  
A knot is where you find.

But all the work of tying  
meets in one small town.  
You live there faute de lieux  
where else could people be?

Symmetries astonish you  
into obvious theologies.  
And yet. Synchrony rules.  
You read a book till things are so.

This is not what he meant back then  
by 'mental strife.' This is oil  
and comforter and quilt of mind.  
A real bird works hard, in cold.

*Ribcage not meant to armor but to fly.*

1 February 2007

## POETRY

I can put the title  
anywhere in the painting I please  
right? An owl  
lamenting over a mousetrap  
like a babe in front of Tiffany's.  
I can use colored ink  
or crayons even.  
I can draw a fish.

1 February 2007

*Aria*

Where have I come  
so far from

the plains are plans  
that no one made

I have to carry out  
until I reach

myself across  
the last river

deep last mountain  
of I am.

1 February 2007

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How a dried up  
jag of peel  
from a Stayman apple  
under the lamp  
on the table top  
looks like a garnet.  
I pick it up  
the resemblance lasts  
down into my fingertips.

1 February 2007

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As long as these are coming to me  
I need an owl, a dark place in trees  
where I confess to any passing priest  
on her way to the fountain. This  
is my sword – with it once  
I stirred a silver cup so tarnished  
it looked like owl feathers.  
What slipped thereafter wet from the  
blade became, this drink I offered  
to the innocent. They made me king,  
the way children do. Now you  
come along and must unking me,  
unkind me too. I would be a bird  
again, or a boy on the way to be one.

2 February 2007

*(from a typed slip several years old)*

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Sneak up on it  
must and only  
two streets to say it  
cobbletongue rebel  
at the mind with slaves.  
The man who broke the book.  
Or winter dawn as Kitty Hawk.  
They take care of themselves  
actually, we just have to let them out.

2 February 2007

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Some keel aspire lung boat  
tour the sky. Squaye  
it said in the French book dream  
was ready in the cruel queer house.  
Mes frères. Who will deny  
a man the right to name himself.  
I am Christ Jesus come back  
in you again, I tell you  
you are He for whom you have been waiting.  
I said the word now you have to be.

2 February 2007

## ST ANTHONY'S EMBERS

Brave grass from id, rust rye,  
fabled ergot of brain screen  
project don't believe it while we can.  
Seigle. Folklore of the rush,  
despondent paleface, williwaw  
welcome February cold. Will warm  
subliminal gospel built into sunshine.

Take. It's lovely work talking to you.  
Coffee smell of a flower nobody found.

Aroma is alterity. Nothing is  
the fragrance it gives off. Yet in  
the old brownstone church Owen  
Kelly built the incense has the taste of God.  
Space is built on that deceiving  
–receiving – kabbalah – I said  
it looks like the hip of a woman  
juttied out, you said it looked  
like an old man hunched over,  
then young and old both sat down  
splayed right arms over the chairback.

Images are only breakfast, tears for lunch.  
But from the sobbing pillow afternoons  
some sweet – but what could it be? – comes.

2 February 2007

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Is as was. This life.  
Now it's ok to listen.  
She stood on a chair  
pale skin so many have  
beneath the signifying  
colors of their clothes.  
If this one memory  
could cure I'd need  
no other. But all the others  
stuff Silenus. The medicine  
cabinet hung on the wall  
of the mind has of course  
a mirror on its door.  
We open up our own  
image and find inside  
all the dusty remedies  
that never worked, fifty  
years of memories  
still there, sticky brown  
bottles, illegible labels,  
memories that nobody  
remembers but here they are.  
And you do. You slam  
the door shut – one  
look is dose enough.  
Back then your fingers  
hold her gently so she won't  
fall, she laughs down at you  
from where she changes  
the bulb on the ceiling.  
Your head is where you  
would have lived once  
for months if she had been  
your mother. Instead of.  
What are you now? A scar  
of sunlight across the table.  
Someone comes into the room.  
You slam the door closed again.  
This time is stays shut. Things  
sometimes do. And you see  
your face still embarrassed by  
desire. All these years. Time

is just the first of your mistakes.

2 February 2007

## VOCABULARY LESSON

*Eco-station* green resort  
Rouault a hundred years ago  
met Matisse I thought was now

a car in the snow  
weird tracks on the lawn, wait

if this were Boulder Colorado  
I would call an animal

magpies golfing up Arapahoe or  
prairie dog town out  
past the dead diner  
where America begins again.

Eco-station, ski resort  
rationally in tune with enviro-issues  
and all the snow is green

rational tune  
vocabulary items  
Put the music on  
(put on: trick or deceive)  
listening as a species of being deceived.

Turn it on  
its side so  
no the other  
side we used to  
have to flip  
so we can  
who's we? hear it

vocabulary item Georges  
Rouault's painting *The Old King*  
so popular at MoMA  
when I was a kid  
every kid needs to have a king  
so I had him,  
a big poster I mounted on poster board  
and hunk like a punkah fan from the beam

above my little cellar room,  
roll over, Rimbaud,  
I want to bite  
your girl's other cheek,  
and there the king presided  
swaying in the little draft,  
murky, semitic, eyes  
turned away from  
what I might be doing in the dark,  
learning vocabulary items

the borrowed words  
we'll never give back

I told you to put it on  
who me? I will, I do, now hear  
the sea flood through the straining bulkhead  
and that means a dream  
will not be denied  
by merest daylight listen  
poinsettia amaryllis et cetera

and outside Egyptian snow.  
I hear those halls now flooded with  
the messy particles of eroded theologies  
when 'the love of God' meant what we mean by 'science'  
and there were no specious differences to solve.

Like Handel, like an oboe—  
men forget ideas at times when they are playing.  
Play the oboe. Or work the oboe?  
Vocabulary items,  
my work is my play,  
my merest mark serenest mândala

vocabulary item  
Haddad interviewed by Lacan,  
every person named, and all her names,  
an item on my list.  
List = trick or deceit.

But that's a different language!  
—That's just politics – all languages are one.

But what about Babel?  
—This, where we are, is Shinar,  
we're still here,  
rubble of 9/11 for example  
just a telling reminder of the clash,  
crash of interpretations,  
Semitic vs Japhetic, vocabulary items  
long ago used up, taken off the shelf  
where only kids can find them

left alone with language and their little king  
kids take down the words and say them

every language fits the mouth  
imagine my tongue in your mouth  
for example imagine vocabulary  
items falling from the rafters  
deep in the unknown interior of your house,

we all speak the same language,  
it's our hearing that's impaired,  
if only we could listen we could understand,

but listening is hard,  
listening has no vocabulary.

Green resorts where all the guests  
are flowers, all the flowers have meanings,  
cure diseases, where all diseases  
are garbled messages.

From the lowlands where we keep our rubble  
we have to bring up here with us  
all the colors we intend to see.

Sallow brick of the old king's face,  
his eyes averted, essential  
for a kid to hide from his king,  
to get his singing done,  
all his dark vocabulary.

3 February 2007

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One set the sea  
one set the tree  
which is me?

Not this not that  
not not-this not not-that  
just the mind

not this one  
this one  
just the wind

had an invention  
a car that runs on air  
we gazed

on him with praises  
to be so green  
but the wind

the one who meant  
was hard to find  
like a friend

a man born blind  
has to see it first  
'a sadness

in search of a heart'  
then the rest of us  
will all know

and the car go.

4 February 2007

## POLITICAL POEM

[*Note: This is a prose piece called "Political Poem."*]

Things bothering me:  
I get so angry  
thinking politics  
I am a part of it or them  
part of the problem.

Rationally (poetry  
is the supreme rationality)  
I know that *those who do harm*  
are the ones I should be reaching,  
teaching, I should not be

just emitting pretty  
consolations for the victims.  
Though they need it.  
I don't think it does much good  
to make more or less well meaning

Americans feel even worse about  
being victims of current American policy—  
the temporary demons we were tricked into choosing  
(election means choice) – we had no choice, did we?  
Well, maybe it helps a little.

But not enough, this is not enough of a real thing  
to call it poetry.  
Poetry is a supreme thing,  
rational, emotional, persuasive, driven,  
true. That's all, and that's the truth,

*Truth is what helps.*  
If I say this with all my heart  
does one reader, somewhere, lower his rifle?  
If I could get one householder to stop killing mice  
wouldn't I be doing more for this green world than Chomsky?

4 February 2007

## MARGINALIA

Now when I finish all my hundred books I can go back and write in all the margins: a new body of work, a new life, parallel lines to infinity, any alphabet I like, print or write, a rapture!

4 11 07

## ARCTIC LOGIC

Gazing raptly at anything that's bright.  
The native me  
encounters  
a thing:

*o Paradiso* I sing, like Caruso  
singing Meyerbeer singing  
Vasco da Gama singing *here*  
*is a bright country*  
full of love and orchids

it will kill me  
piece by piece

but not till I have mentioned every one  
is that song done.

4 February 2007

## STAND

on bridge look down  
at stream flows fast  
ten feet beneath  
shallow clear.

I will wait here  
for a sign, till  
something comes floating  
fast towards me

fish or snake or knight  
on Swan Boat  
then I can leave  
this betweening.

But it is winter  
it is cold, it is winter  
all the Knights  
are hibernating,

there is water in me  
also current, it too  
can take me home  
I can be the very one

I'm waiting for,  
a cold man on a bridge.  
From the other side  
I see the water rush away

leaving behind at streamside  
cute coasters of clear ice  
shimmering shining  
now can I please go home?

4 February 2007

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*to HSB*

Peeling onion  
other night  
thought of this.  
Dorn would laugh  
to see me cry--  
real men  
eat skin and all.  
Spit out poetry.

4 February 2007