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But is it always too much for me  
I think it is, the sea

and these august vivacious personages  
who haunt its in and out

approach approach recede recede  
a million year ballet they've made of that

simplicity

and the seal is my mother.  
Ten years after her death

we saw her in Galway Bay, her kind eyes  
calm company she kept us as we strolled.

10 August 2007

= = = = =

I have built my house  
of many failures  
each one apt for its function

a mosaic a thousand chips  
of broken glass add up to Christ  
looking down sadly farewelling the earth

but he can never leave.  
And my house of failure  
stands tall on the hillside—

a ruin has no enemies  
birds and lizards and echoes  
all live at peace in the shade.

10 August 2007

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Where we work

is always another.

*A don i ram* the chords spell out,

Adoniram the architect

who is slain into his work

And the temple also vanishes

into time.

The work a man has done

goes into thin air

when his life is gone, the same air

into which his last breath yields,

and the name of his death is his son.

But this thin air of ours

thin as paper

holds the work

in suspension always—

that is the Lost Word

of his Freemasons,

the word once spoken

can never leave our world,

our world is the place

where every word is wrapped,

word lost into air—

and it is the movement of the air we hear,

word lost in the ear.

I'm listening to an old opera nobody knows,

about Solomon's Temple and the Queen of Sheba,

and the mysterious architect

who built the latter's form into the former

so that she lives forever

in what has been lost,

Gounod's *La Reine de Saba*, into which

the words of the great mystic poet Nerval

are lost,

lost into the singing,  
lost into music and the music lost I find,  
the Queen is singing as I speak.

10 August 2007

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As if there were something we had to do first  
even before waking

so we lie there in bed and open our eyes  
conscious of having missed something already

what was it, an opportunity,  
a glimpse of some god?

11 August 2007

= = = = =

I want to tell you about it  
whoever it was  
the boy on the swing  
reading a book as he moved  
more by gravity than by will,  
swayed by what we share,  
air, earth, fire, water. And you  
who are listening to me now.

An impertinence, from me to you,  
one more of so many, a not  
quite legitimate caress.

11 August 2007

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Watch. Activity of some sort  
rappelling down the rock face

or just a face, a man's  
face, not all that old,

you scaled the bridge of the nose,  
now the overhang of brow

and the one descending meets you there  
and you discuss the Person

on whose calm face you climb.  
Is he dead? Asleep?

Enlightened? Indifferent?  
Why doesn't he brush you away?

Why are we permitted still  
our ascensions and descents?

11 August 2007



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We live on a planet of forced marriages.  
The extravagant architecture of a grasshopper  
dizzies our aesthetics,  
we creep along  
full of unlikely loves.

11 August 2007

## CARREFOUR

Centuries of dismay  
walk around the same old streets

same one, same old crossroads  
a hundred thousand years,

crossroads  
we are about them,  
sitting, intercepting,  
never going anywhere

that's the half of us.

The cross and the arrow:  
the stayer and the goer.

The right spot and the all gone.

11 August 2007

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Spirits of the utterly gone  
are gone.

What stays  
are airs they  
moved by speaking.

These  
perdure.

Vibrations  
linger, part  
of a vibratory dream  
we machine.

All the ancestors  
have gone down into us.

11 August 2007

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Our ghosts walk  
along the London street,  
father, grandmother,  
a statue of someone  
who looks terribly like you

yourself, there,  
over the somber garden.  
Maybe we are the ghosts  
as music is the body's ghost

the hands the chest  
expand the air  
                            the god  
      is there!

And then the singer dies.  
Ghosts chase us in the streets.

11 August 2007

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*(to celebrate Pir Zia's academy)*

The heart behind the heart  
we have we need  
the columns of her house

one single child is running  
in her shadows, hides  
behind every column turn by turn

one single child  
who keeps me on my toes  
panting I follow

and strange to say  
you're chasing after that child too,  
you're quick when I'm slow

you stop when I go  
hardly ever do I get a clear  
sighting of the child

sometimes I do  
hardly ever get a glimpse  
of you also pursuing

sometimes when I stop to catch my breath  
and stare deep into the shadows of her house  
I wonder if you might be the child I'm chasing

or maybe even I'm the one  
you're after all these years  
heart of the other.

12 August 2007

= = = = =

I still need the sky.  
I try to live without  
but there it is

every now and then  
it kisses the nape of my neck  
and then I know

But what do I know?  
the goal is the path.  
Struggle to be here—

there are August days  
when ice cream is answer enough.

12 August 2007

= = = = =

[answering Harvey Bialy's image, "The One of the South & the One of the North"]

He put down his measuring tape  
and stalked off through his eyeglasses  
into the amber world

Yes, I am here again  
he said when he got there

men swinging hammers  
a flock of purple finches bothering the trees

So that's what they mean by ritual  
he thought and thought again

there is no ceremony but the skin.

12 August 2007

## CASTAWAY SUMMER

Drift out of a former revolution.  
Close quartered, an army sleeps.

Is that you, jackdaw, perched  
black with a little white

on the phone pole, listening?  
Are you listening to me?

Teach me her profile clear  
so I will recognize it when she comes

evening sky, no stars.

12 August 2007



= = = = =

**Know what darkness knows**

a life for the perceiver  
ripening in these, down there  
where music rises  
to the surface like pain,  
one more mysterium

Of an eye  
opening  
garage door swings up  
empty  
smell of warm old wood  
kept  
into cool twilight  
dead space  
suddenly wakes

“like pain”  
as if a comparison  
could ever or could even  
as if.

Big plans  
try to let go of plans  
Big plans of being able to let go

A fetch  
they called it  
who from me  
went out  
into the pretend world  
pretending  
to be successful  
as an ordinary  
a man on the street  
a man on two feet

but failing  
would come back  
real enough  
to rend me,  
break me  
into my elements  
and ocean them  
ever away

as if God  
had come  
and touched me

as if God  
were a thought  
I had sent out

to explain the world  
now  
come back to rend me

three-person'd Deity  
I and you  
and those scraps of matter  
once called me

*ich nichts*

And this molecular recombining  
the sage calls Love  
and writes hymns to

we are safe in the process  
every word comes home

the mind empowerment

A trickle of water down my cheek or is it sweat

We are guilty of our explanations.

13 August 2007

## ALERTNESS FINALLY KICKS IN

The ship, tired of sinking, sticks  
to the postcard waves. Orange sunset,  
purple troughs of sea, the works.  
Send it to me so I can know  
what going looks like,  
a single shape  
snouting somewhere invisibly far  
through some sustaining medium.  
Oh. Now I get it,  
there is nowhere to go,  
only the boat. The passengers  
busy with deck shuffleboard and tom  
collinses and playing quoits  
really are just standing still. The ship  
stands, still on its postcard, named.  
I think I am beginning to understand.

13 August 2007

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if I could have anything  
it would be to have the natural compassion  
wanting not to lose a single  
soul a single life  
a single grain of salt

but does my wanting that mean it's close  
or even further away?  
desire distances. actual feeling nears.

13 August 2007