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THE GREEN MAN

Too late for corn
the green man stands
indecisive at the rim
of the clearing — should he
seize her now or wait
till pumpkins get smashed
by yammering yokels
his fierce religion
masked by mere revelry
townsfolk at play
and other nightmares
that scare the poor owls
in what should be their
own night?

He waits
for the maiden. He has
been waiting for centuries
for the right one.
Is that you? he asks,
his voice froggy with green,
but each one smiles or frowns
or runs away. He knows
the one he means
comes silently to his arms

**expressionless as he,
just part of what goes on.
His green god will send
him strength enough to
take her after all these years.
Autumn is his special music,
he strips the leaves off
and leaves the needles on—
two kinds of trees, two
kinds of mortals, and he
between them, waiting
his hour. Soon the dead
come to greet him, brother,
at their special midnight
for they are waiting too.**

20 October 2014

WELCOMING SABBATH

1.

We fill in
the spaces later
when the wind blows from the south
and the flag on the bridge stands straight out
and one county touches another
and I am between.

I have lived for the names of things,
kingdoms, genera, directions,
times of day. The gloaming now.
The west country. The marches.

2.

They were waiting for me
to fill. My eyes
were alien instruments,
theirs, aometimes my hands.

Nomina numina.

The feel of a thing—
how granite from marble,
pine from ash
and the smell of apple wood
burning on an October evening.
No sense goes lost.

**Every one of my kind
(and that means you)
is an encyclopedia of experiences.
And our legs are stored
with every place we've walked.**

**3.
But it was names that told us where to go
and how to feel once we got there.
Only rarely does a place explain itself
— Topanga Canyon, Clermont, Cuttyhunk—
and then it grasps you by the mind.
You have to lie to find your way home.**

**4.
I explained too much.
All you needed
was for me to say
Come, beloved,
let's welcome
the name of the Sabbath,
the Seventh Woman,
every seventh word
will be our nesting place,
all cleverness will pass away**

**and we'll rest together
almost touching
in the orchard of named things
where each curse is a blessing
and the ripe fruit does not always
shrink from the hand.**

**5.
For the Sabbath
is not just of days.
It is her presence
now and then
where a whole number
between six and seven
hides, and that is she
and another with her
on the other side
of numbers, and that
could be me. She hides
between the bird
and the sky, between
any number and the next,
hides between letters
of a name. All spaces
spell her, and the shadows
are her favored house.**

6.

In a certain way of saying it
Come means Go.
That is where she hides.
Come, let us welcome the bride.
Go, open the door for her.
We in our feeble know-how,
we are the groom. Long
ago she wrote our names
on birch bark with peach gum,
wrote them down clear
and waits all these years
for us to learn to read.
Her runes are everywhere.
When the breeze comes up
you'll swear it is her fingers
on your skin. False analysis.
Your skin is hers already.

Lost in feelings as if I were
no more but what I feel
I remember her, she saves me,
she is the Sabbath, the gap,
the living gap between

**illusory realities. The Silence
which is all we know of the gods.
The silence of named things.**

21 October 2014

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**Lascaux in the head the walls
of the cranium bedight with figuring
the beast the woman the hand
the weapon the hand the horn
the misery of blank spaces
where nothing lives, they all
are dead their images persist
I try to tell them I am interspecies
am human somewhat with a jag
of Neander Valley, a twist of Mars
back from the days when merchants
plied the planets and understood
all that we have forgotten, we try
to paint it on canvas, Turner, Picasso,
or the innocuous landscapes of Ilya
Repin which are really somewhere
else but they don't believe me,
they believe only their own differences,
named particulars that hem them in,
races, genders, religions, but I am
nameless, or my difference is. Wherefore
I pray to sit silent in their councils,
taking in what wisdom as I can find.
Where do I come from? Who is my home?**

21 October 2014

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**You get used to the pain
to the not being there
anywhere ever again.
You get used to the silence
of that voice. Used
to the absence. But then
you hear it again, coming
it seems from inside you
but you're not sure. That
very voice calling your name.**

21 October 2014

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**Headache maybe or stranger still
a headache with no pain, just blank
where the ache should be. Study it.
Write a book about it starting
right here. The Painless Pain.
The Empty Brain. The Sleepless
Weariness. Good titles, they all
will know what you mean, they
have been here too, wherever
this is, the empty place, the street
that goes nowhere, quietly,
not even to itself. All the houses
are dark, the stores are closed.
There is taste in your mouth
you have tasted before, indifferent
like everything else. In the old days
you could sit on the stoop, just
waiting for something to happen.
Once long ago a bus came by,
its wheel hit a peach pit, spat it
hard at the porch, it left a dent
where it landed. It could have been
your eye. Maybe it was. That's
what it is, you still taste the peach.
The pain is still gone. So long.
You think, I must have left here
long ago and not got anywhere yet.**

21 October 2014

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**Absurd I think it really is
the daytime dreams, the fidgeting
in the back of the mind where
memory starts getting ideas
as if we didn't have enough
already to remember. Nothing there
but feelings, so we have to limn
(fine old word) images to suit
as if such things happened once
to me and made me what you find.
But do you find me? Or have I
hidden myself in all those images?**

21 October 2014

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**Longing, the long luster
on the name of her,
queen or quickest dancer
leader among the Gauls
those forest fighters, gloom
be on their enemies
she roused to attack.
Pulchra Bellona fair
face of mental war
against the wrong idea,
using just the sword of art
she lifts in the ordinary
muscles of a hand—
the mind moves all.**

22 October 2014

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**Those who wait for me above
the earth and the ones below
with rings on all their fingers
and in those rings are jewels
they will give to me and all
I have to do is sing their songs
for them my whole life long—
garnets shaped like our hearts**

22 October 2014

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**Rewards. Nothing given,
everything gotten.
We are born.
Everything comes after.
The transaction
lasts eighty years or so,
the merchant lives forever.
And we belong at last
to everything we see.**

22 October 2014

LINLITHGOW

**The volunteers
can do little
but stand around.
The fire burns itself out,
no harm done.**

**They speak some other
language here I fear,
made myself understood
with feet and hands.**

I go. I touch. I see,

**But people become young
when you look at them
too long. I alone
am left in the field,
some kind of weathered rock,
a stone with eyes.**

22 October 2014

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**Tell him your pain
for crying out loud
we used to say, let
everyone hear
the situation, the doubt
hissing in the heart
of love that desire can
sometimes muffle.
Tell him pain is there,
measure it out for him
in pounds and miles,
tears and sleepless
dawns. Every person
thinks he is alone
in suffering. Remind him
you too are there,
right there, baffled as he is,
confusion is common,
confusion is pain.
Let him know you're not
there forever but are
utterly here now.
Let him understand
now is his only chance,
now is the only time there is.**

22 October 2014

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**But suppose there were genders
as they were in our original planet
before we mixed and grew intolerant
and rendered seven genders by two
all-purpose sexes as we thought—
ah, efficiency, thou bane of beautiful!**

**Suppose the double suns still
warmed us but not too much, and
half a dozen moons moved respectful
around the big Seventh, the Sabbath,
one moon for each gender. And when
we came we lost them too, one cold
amphibian up there and one sun
mad with flame and heat. Suppose**

**we could be as we once were, suppose
we could think those orbs into orbit
again all round us, and we could play
in all the permutations of our bliss
and nobody gets hurt. Are we brave
enough to think us back to peacr?
Angerless, warless, deep in earnest play.**

22 October 2014

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**We will sleep together
in the wide bed called music
and each of us wake virgin again
purified by what defiled us.**

22 October 2014

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It slept me today

**nor wake could yet
sparrowbusy though
thoughts might**

it sleeps me still.

2.

**should I tell you
of all people the no
of all my yesses
the not yet of
all my always
the bleaks of all
my kind of gold?
no you must know
already being you.
Sometimes pain
and times never.
What's happening
in the house of my head?**

23 October 2014

MY URCHESTRA

**Primal sounds
to unsuspection you
and lull your weary reason—**

nothing to understand!

**This is the ur-chestra
playing right now in our head
between the mastoid and
the pineal it all boils ober,
listen to the grunting luba,
the plainting massoon,
the whining oboy making glad moan,**

**listen as the fabric of the world
tears itself to shreds
under the claws of the violince,**

**be consoled for the wound by the fatherly bello,
the feathery floops on high, the wee my-angle
winking at time itself, ting-teen ting-teen**

**and it all makes one mass,
high or low as souls require,
one mass, one sound, one baptism of noise**

**that wins your heart, yes, yours,
you skeptical iPhone wielding
snarkopod, even yours.**

This sound, *digo*, is all there is.

**Schwitters called it *Urlaut*
and made it with his voice
but voices are too recent,
we humans just got here,
we need the sounds that spoke
before volcanos and plesiosaurs,
before the earth detached
itself from Her Majesty the Sun**

**and by a paradox (I decided)
our hand-made instruments
can be older than their maker,
right now can blow the primal
note! The tune that began us
and not just us. For the stone
is our uncle and the air
our nursemaid, and every sound
tells us what will come to pass**

**as they say, in time to come
though what passing and coming
have to do with it I cant guess**

since everything happens right now.

23 October 2014

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**Variegation of textures
a man on a horse
riding slow a green field
in sight of a simple hill**

**Freedom waits
always across a border
you can barely make out
from here. But the horse
knows the way.
Ridden and rider
are strange to each other,
I know his sister,
he knows a man
I went to school with,
things like that
on and on. Cold
out here, we are
so far from home.**

23 October 2014

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**There was a mean man
and he died.
Children rejoiced,
I never got over it,
I mourn him still.**

23 October 2014