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STEPS (2. SABBATHS)

1. Not hear from all side
   the listen one
   nor message brutal
   into the calm wake
   subsiding of a self went
   not long before
   bare trees stood
   close together in new sun

2. Sabbath commandment
   or a bird
   a leaf knows its way
   to the ground
   sometimes devious
   the roots of gravity
   we also fall

3. but who insists
   is evidence
   “I” want “you”
   for a church
say mass in
pure motion in
personless glory
now arrives

4.
gatekeeper carry
the frontier these
pale rememberers
drunk on mere dawn

5.
this as much as feels
new coin likely aluminum
a translation from value
into utility something even
if less than loaf of bread

6.
cure the system
in one generation
buy only the intrinsic

7.
younger heal faster
universal suffrage
ages the commonwealth
all leaves no fruit
watch the dancers
decide

8.
Wotan’s madness
is to think
worlds can be created
or otherwise
he did it or someone—
gods rage against the real

9.
gradually getting
better it hurts
the moral excitement
of narrative
then it was night

10.
dense branches bare
shredding sunlight
into denser
intervals
   looking
discovers what
music actually means
11.
have the authority to say so
it’s all a museum anyhow
one day a week is always closed

12.
my breath is short but my arms are long
so you don’t leave without saying goodbye.

6 November 2011
Where did the star go I saw last night
if not right here in the struggle to name it
as things vanish into their names

above freezing, taking out the trash
thinking about Ted Enslin and Orion, this
is not Orion, this was something all by itself

a wanderer in a crowded forest
I could swear it was smiling, smiling at me
me through the everlasting trees of air.

6 November 2011
EVOLUTION OF THE REPTILES

or sometime choosing
to be only for yourself
doing nothing for the world
but take in.

No. Even there
is virtue found.
Destabilize the calm.
To lurk. The way
meaning lurks in propositions.
To be danger. To instruct.
Wisdom of the Nagas
who have no work but wariness.

6 November 2011
Who know who they mean
when they say me? Not I.

6.XI.11
The funny candidate
scratchy dried linden blossoms
snugged into the peasant blouse low neckline
and a man walks by with a whippet

it could be a dream or early afternoon
late summer in Sankt-Georgen (Black Forest) but it’s me they laugh at, kindly,
the way you’d smile at pigeons in low clouds.

7 November 2011
But the very thin girl
friendly warned me
of the dangerous box

then sat two seats past me
on the uptown express
beyond two kids in climbing gear

these images have meaning
of a sort, maybe like a bus
transfer expired fifty years past.

7 November 2011
The vee of tree
from one root
ascending
gracile as antelope horns
uplifted in deserto—
warily warily my love
will there be a place
for me between
those columns
holy doorway to
the temple of air?

7 November 2011
BEFORE THE FIRST COMMANDMENT EVEN

Buy one
of everything
and let the
lady choose.

7.XI.11
SURSUM CORDA

Something closer, like a paradise.
Heart summoned to lift up
is grumpy, drags the heart-heels
whines for its mother. But the heart
has no mother, the heart is pure,
startles and pure traffic, intention,
needs no instruction, left
to itself will unlock Eden and dance in.

7 November 2011
THICKET

The eye moves in where the rest of me can’t—
we do strange things when we’re alive

time, for instance, how much of it we spill
into the stupidest mischances—work,
religion, sciences—when we could

deliver the actual, glories of an afternoon
or all-delivering scholarship of night.

7 November 2011
To be a land across the river
the way silver is across the street from gold
a beach at sunrise nobody there
two fishermen two furlongs out from shore

one hopes they catch nothing, or everything
and give a lot to me, I refuse on principle,
a barnacle’s a living thing, the sea
is a mouth full of living words

why don’t I hear, or can’t,
anything but roar? To get there,
to build my house out of a single moment
and be there long past the end.

7 November 2011
STEPS (3)

1.
And this to be
to say to you
a lamb bleating for its mother
holds this gold world

the natural is the supernatural

this gold world leaf and bracken
the backyard is
of a high strange house

palace of the way it will be.

2.
Think on it
every pain
and small delight
a guerdon is
or recompense

amor fati, then,
everything we do
happens to us—
not a circle, liebster Fritz,
but a spiral
of reciprocals
twists till it comes
to the point of all this

hurt nobody help all
and watch the watcher watch.

3.
Maybe even more than that
we come back to get done to what we did

but there is no we, only you, only me,
this desert island of seven billion souls.

4.
Graven image: that means coin
means property. Increase and divide.
The locusts were crying when I crossed
knee-deep I seemed
to stand among them
before the river. Idaho.
Then a river then a woman
reading on the porch.
One of the four billion faces of god.
5.
But god is not natural.
Though lovable,
this import from Palestine.
Or Egypt. Who knows
the whole sentence of which
God is the verb?

6.
Never have been comfortable
in my ‘own’ name.
And my shoes are tight.

7.
And so we come back to California
where most of me began
and the santa ana blew down Lake
and scoured me clean of East New York
and I bought big sneakers at the original Van’s
and lapped up menudo nights at Barragan’s
and fell in love with one more librarian
but what broke my heart were the poor
old shuffling waiters at Kabakian’s
who would lift the first forkful to the diner’s lips.
8.
Because it’s mostly about eating
isn’t it and being fed
that’s what the lamb wants
or thinks it does, thinks
it is Food
was the first accident
replacement of the genuine
sustaining flow.
It was supposed to be love
that does all the answering.
Don’t give me food
the lamb says, give me
what I need.

9.
And I misheard your name
and the red leaves still blaze on the burning bush.
Tell me again where we first met—
but there is no we, I said,
there is only geography,
naked skin, sleek leather couch.

10.
The shadow of the house I’m sitting in
stretches out on somebody else’s lawn.
I have no shadow of my own, or am included
in the shadow of where not what I am.
It chastens me to see the somber grass
limned by the bright green, and I recognize
all I am is in that shadow, indistinct,
a company-man of everything that is, indistinct,
my voice a rumble in the tumbling stream across the road.
As if the Ancients had written: *Hide
a shadow in a shadow. Live forever.*

11
A song bush
an afterplay
the glow
of knowing
all of you
all the glad
pretending
makes us true.
The odd number
of me and you.

8 November 2011
This old now.
This ancient moment, 
the missing present. All gold.
All gone.

8 November 2011