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I write what the time needs,
what the time
tells me to

Not the news, the news
is always old by the time it gets out,
time doesn’t want me to say
what I heard, wants me
to say what I’m hearing
now. I write tomorrow.

8 October 2011
= = = = =

Slow me down?
The long word comes again?
I am a leaf on your tree
you know when to let me fall.

8 October 2011
= = = = =

Another pen
another instrument
another way
to know my mind.

8 October 2011
Listen to the liberal dead
their tawny telling
they remember too much
but every now and then
they forget something
down into you to tell

October. At least the sky
is true.

8 October 2011
Or to go back to when you were alive
and I was not, uneasy afternoon on the Adriatic
when the sun crept into your veins and six
days later you were dead, on land, on the road,
on the way home, the whole Empire in your eyes
lasts even till now. And we think things die!

8 October 2011
= = = = =

Change the tool to change the mind or
China over the horizon north, yes,
north has the best sky, it’s not all Sufi east
not all Celtic west or cloying south.

There it is, great north of *empty energy*,
green ice of Labrador, shaman smoke along the Lena.
I face the Arctic for my prayer, North Star my qibla.

8 October 2011
Take a big blue globe with you
whenever you leave the house
and a leaf from a backyard tree.
You’ll know where everything is.
You’ll know how to find your way home.

8 October 2011
The merchandise from Eden
we carry still.
Guilt and obedience and shame,
a withered fig stuck to my naked mind.

8 October 2011
So a many of churches one cannot pray own’s prayers. (FW)

& if not those, whose?
I don’t believe in other people
lipping my meanings out
even in Latin the Lost.

(… 8.X.11)
TOPIARY

Beyond the yew wall
green be yielding.
In time a thing
becomes its opposite.
Strives to. Leaf to blood,
woman to man. Heaven
to Hell. Earth
the midpoint of our transformation.
The wall of yew
shields me a little bit from change,
just for a moment
I am who I am, I speak.

9 October 2011
“October’s bright blue weather” my father would have quoted today, smiling at the hint of warmth not a cloud in the world.

9 October 2011
THE ODES OF OCTOBER

1.
Castaway. Listen for it,
it comes again, from the air,
a spell of night, taste it
hold it in your mouth
until you’re the sun.

Was a sea so meant
to be like anyone?
Evident energy fingertip
tingle a thousand miles
to move the map
around, to go.

Answer me,
the loneliest finger,
I draw magic circle
in spilled beer,
Or even a lake.
It is magic.
That is, it works.

They watch me closely
from some other room
when there is only this,
castaways, they listen

to hysterical birdsongs,
write them down for me,
I’m too sober to pay attention.

2.
I thought you were a chemical
taste and consequence
or a big truck carried so much
so many mind
like a love song on television
an excuse for showing
what no song can touch.

Sudden the rush of blood
a shuddering roadbed
we are steel bridges slung
over dangerous neighborhoods.
To do what you are
requires a huge population,

practice, practice, rosary
beads slipping through the fingers,
we know who God is
because our mother told us.
But did we listen?
We wanted from the beginning
to kiss God on the mouth.
No compromises.

3.
Take this word out and put
this word in, all the way in
till it meets resistance
then lift gently
till the mind folds
over herself and dreams.

There the word lodges
and welds dream images.
In time the whole lexicon
embed. A book is fever.

Moonlight of pale print.
Call the plumber.
The word dreams
your day all around you.
Have a drink. The sky.
4.
That’s as far as I got,
my superstitions get in our way,
where to lay my fingertips
where they won’t be cast adrift.
from the blue sky?

There I was pressing in
as if I could all by myself
lift up and sustain
all the victims in the world
with this one touch.

Did you ever watch a dying man
settle for one more breath
then sigh it out and nothing more?
It is a highway and one goes.

5.
These are words they mean
the things they say
but not much more.
Poetry measures things
but doesn’t sell them.
The men at the bar
have measures of their own.
It has to be mysterious
to leave room for everyone.

It has to be clear
enough to feel
fingers on the skin.

6.
As long as we’re closer
than the day before
no matter what autumn answers
Take it gladly on your word
(starlight on a small town
muddy shoes, spotless diner)
where take means tell.

In Venice the little bridges
excited me most, every step
a border crossed, a maze
solved, the smell of each plaza
sticks in the nostrils a while—

new religions in old places,
new bodies inside one God,
oceans, histories, all the things
distract me from
the complex equation
we walk around in
somehow holding hands.
And we’re not even there.

Finding my way to you
isn’t easy, I have so many trees,
neckties (wear a skirt of them?)
so many alphabets, locks
keyholes stuffed with clay.

It’s morning after all—
what have I forgotten to do?
All feathers and no bird.

Always carry everything with you.
Always leave everything home.
I just heard an owl cry
hungry for something too.

10 October 2011
To know someone in dream
is to lose them forever
from this ordinary sleeping world?

Suppose it was an old friend—
so build your house out of sand
dry sand and pray it stands,

the checks fly out in the mail
and few come back or
you knew her when she was someone you knew

and now nobody. No body at all.

11 October 2011
THE NEED TO SPECIFY

A brutal twin-bladed ax
to which we prayed back then
became Thor’s hammer
became the Cross—
so shaped are we by shape
itself, the array
beholds us and we are held.

11 October 2011