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Somewhere finds the way in
as in the book you borrow
someone else’s reading karma
dogeared the page you open to

and now it’s yours, the fear and lust
brought you to this page,
this stilted conversation,
canned description, a coin

maybe of a vanished country
minted before you were born.
And here it is in your hand.
Art. Spend it if you can.

4 October 2013
Suppose each color were a different night
you have to sleep through each
to know the truth of them

that’s what the old painters did,
endure the dream of red
the violet neighborhood on the way to dawn

where light, mother of all colors,
absorbs them back into her white self
and scalds the eye with seeing.

Don’t look at the light,
don’t cross your eyes
trying to peer inside your skull —
trust the colors — they are the real
words that It said.

4 October 2013
The sun is same.
That is the likeness
of itself is everywhere.
In shade I hide,
knowing no better —
dark music arrives
quick blood of listening.
Listen again, yellow.
Name your children one by one.
Eventually
the family is complete,
the fish swims to the table,
the moose bellows in the yard.
This is the dispersion,
the dream called waking,
hello everybody again.

4 October 2013
In childhood
we solve all problems
by getting sick.
Sometimes we can’t get better.
Even when I don’t have to go to school.
The cure outlasts the first disease
and becomes the second.
I inherit horror from myself —
the trees will not leave me alone.

4 October 2013
Casting about for something exact—
a spirit maybe or a guide
walks down the air and speaks a language
I used to know. Now
even the city of it is forgotten
though there was a bridge
and a light across the river
a big store where they sold lamps
and nothing else. Find me,
I beg, I’m not proud,
or I am proud, but only of how well
I sometimes seem to listen.
And then I know you. So please
come and know me, this
is not a song thing happening,
it’s a blue need, like dungarees
in August or the mist over Yamuna.
Well there’s a time and there’s
a place and what more can I do?

It’s up to you. I spread the curtains

startled by the sudden legs of light

standing right outside the room.

Who are you, who are you, I ask.

And not for the first time.

4 October 2013
Exact resemblances
elude the Paris theatres.
We shiver backstage
knowing our lines too well.

This is your language, I
am only along for the ride.
The curtain rises. Scene:
a living room in the provinces
pimpled with knick-knacks.
A dog perhaps alive is curled
under an oval table, on which
a newspaper lies limp, open.

Someone in shadows seems
downstage to examine a painted
window as if there were a world.
We know better. Outside only
more people talking. Semaphores

on 19th century railway tracks.

A rusted tank half-sunk in the marsh.

Only language lasts, but not the words.

4 October 2013
INSCRIPTION FOR A TOMBSTONE

You of all people should know
how easily I’m manipulated.
For instance I am dead and you’re alive.
A whole religion could be made of us.

4 October 2013
The privilege of offering

to be the with world

as it works,

to be by mind

apart of that

which goes and that which stays.

A cup of tea offered,

or a sweet wine

out of childhood,

or word or bread,

everything the mind can lift

you raise to being.

5 October 2013
Motionless on the move,
the light trick
ever arriving.

Pass through me
also, we chamber
each other only
for little moments
cut from the tedious weave
and they incandesce.

Whatever that means.
Something ancient, Mediterranean,
humanist, sparkling,
shiver in the thighs, brief.

5 October 2013
Where we began so there we are
losing battle against the self
doomed from the words I heard
doomed
Adonai a cry

Why are the words scattered
on the page in the Song of the Sea?
Because it’s poetry, she said,
a poem is Sator,
a sower of seeds
across the fallow page,
to see what meaning will grow
from all that space
pierced with those scattered words
— the place alone
speaks to the mind eye.

5 October 2013
Flower philosophy
Coals all burnt
little fruit trees too
availabilities of

walking by the woman gate
to sell release,
you never have to
walk this street again

“no more work”
because sun spills grass
cesped you say
from a far poem
or the sea, the sea.

5 October 2013
Accidental prophet
his words
temporarily true

meaning is like jogging
a flash soon passed

so I wrote a book
to say it, to keep
you from listening.

5 October 2013
My chemistry set.

Do they still give them
to children? It was
my favorite gift,
Gilbert’s was best.

Or tall olive green
cabinet ranged with jars.

And what did I learn
from all those chemicals?

To sit alone and work

and think about the names of things,
how different they are
from what they do

5 October 2013
for Sherry

Cats are the normal ones.

We are the magic ones

maybe. They and their kindred

(wolves, tapirs, salamanders)

are the natural inhabitants

of this beautiful house,

this strange house, strange

to us lovers and warriors

who come from Mars or Fairyland

and try — so difficult, really —

to be at home here.

On this weird earth.

Lady, the cat you lost

was your landlord

who taught you how to be here,

make love, to think

long thoughts and lie in the sun.

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5 October 2013
Vultures
fly into a cloud.
Maybe eight of them.
The cloud coherent.
They fly in and don’t fly out.

It is as I have thought —
a cloud forms around a mystery
some God or some death —
the vultures pray to it now,
unlettered sextons in this high church.

5 October 20913
THE DUCK AT THE DOOR

Something innocent is always waiting to happen.
This menacing world may make you smile
as at summer’s end the trees turn gold.

As once we sat out on the back porch
and saw come stepping of the long driveway
two white ducks. Never knew
where they came from, they lived
with us a year or two, here, eating
all the treats we could think of
(read “The Home Duck Flock” as our research)
or across the road in the stream above the falls.
Then one day they were gone, one we think down
the rapids to the river, one I fear
into the fox. The tenderness
they gave us lasts all these years.
I see them still when I look at the stream.

5 October 2013