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When the handwriting changes overnight
the man is clothed in white

he crawls through the window into church
he pretends to be both priest and congregation

he opens his mouth and breathes words in
air full of dust from rafters where sparrows flutter

he stretches out prone before the altar
arms widespread to fly into the stone

this is what happens in our town
and I’m the only one who dares report it.

21 April 2013
Can it even trace the broken
bone that folds the wing down
and a sparrow falls?

Does it see it,
cognize in what distant brain
the neural transmissions of your misery?
Destiny? Is there anybody there?
Is anything happening?
The grass knows how to grow.
The dust on the road
talks to the wind, whirls,
every word wants to be the Bible.

21 April 2013
There is caution to it
like a cat’s eye,
you have horses
we have deer but I
have never ridden
anyone except myself,
hard, till the rocks
under my feet began to sweat
blood, you know how it is,
you are desert too,
night sky full of stars
no one else has ever seen.

21 April 2013
And she saw a mountain lion
out there three years back, snow
December little hill, and the next day
his big fat paw prints chasing
nimble wedge-footed deer
tracks stopped at the cliff.
A beast leaps for its life,
another beast turns back,
cautious as any other cat,
full of conscience, that stir
of energy inside that alone
can make us bad or sometimes good.

21 April 2013
I don’t want to tell a story
I want it to tell the story
this demand defines me
I can find glory in a falling leaf
a transit of ordinary cloud
but can I give it to you?
Only it can tell, only it
lets the glory speak, loud
as Scarlatti on the harpsichord
no way for it to be too soft.

21 April 2013
Big themes boulders
in your back yard
reek of cat pee in the shade
a kid digging little trenches
and putting little plastic soldiers in.
The war will never come, never go away.

2.
So I learned to read Greek one time
by reading Homer. Anger and killing and why.
I still don’t understand what I read.
Stars all over the sky, which one is mine?

21 April 2013
ON THIS DAY

Parilia,
    feast of Pales
    goddess of field and flocks,
foundning of the city of Rome

and death of Remus
who leapt over the mundus,
    the sacred ditch and wall
his brother had just plowed,
    the sacred enclosure that the City is

and the god Celer struck Remus down,
    with a gold shovel, gold plow,
    the brother weeping for his brother
showed no wet tears.

A dozen crows Romulus had seen,
all in one long line,
god-given ravens,
    and thunder on the left.

But Remus laughed at this meek symbolism
and Remus died.
Later over the brother’s corpse the brother wept,
Tamerlan dead, crushed by his brother’s wheel.
Dzhokhar with his throat torn out
lies in the hospital ditch
writing on a waxen tablet
all the lying nonsense that sends men to their death.

21 April 2013
Sorry, is that a world out there
or is it only me?

Years ago
when I wore hats and ties
I looked like what I thought was you,
Quirites of Rome, workingmen at Midwood,
Marine Park, New Lots, Ozone Park.
I read it all in some book
on the border of Queens
— two roses argent and gules linked —
when woman appeared,

visio beatifica
as offered in churches or any passing Dante,
there she was she always is —

not by essence but by alterity alone —
sorry, I mean I’m not saying anything at all
about the nature of woman, only
about the nature of otherness, or is the other
in her that heals the him in me.

And I would assume
vice-versa,

am I not your other, Beatrice,
am I not here for you as you for me,
to answer the howling autistic silences within?

22 April 2013
ARS POETICA  22.IV.13

As the words go faster
their shape on the page
breaks down. This tells
something about me bien sûr
but something also about
them. A word is speed.
Chained like a cheetah
let it loose,
follow it fast as you can,
the word will always
get there before you do.

22 April 2013
MONUMENT TO

The brave men who leave nothing behind. Who go into the dark carrying nothing thereto. Just as being is. A sense of continuing a while in an unknowable place. And actually being there.

22 April 2013
No one is here yet
the grass
has a language of its own
I heard it all night
talking with the pregnant moon

each animal
reassures the other
the rock for water
the mineral mind.

2.
So I’ve been on this road
a long time, the saints
keep moving their bones around
until the whole earth becomes
one desperate pilgrimage.

Listen at the open doors
of the houses as they pass
how boring the conversations are
inside, how dearly
I wish I could go in and be them.
3.

But the moon cheered me up
before I went to sleep,
she was big and bright and simple,
all wedding cake and mistletoe

and I was me again, legs sore
from sitting still, dreams
already snarling at the gate
but she was always calm

I don’t dream you, you
don’t dream me.
Nobody dreams us
and the wind is always.

23 April 2013
You can tell I was reading cities in my sleep.
Appalled by my footsteps back there on the road
I woke and saw a single crow fly
slowly to a low branch and look at me.
How alone can anything be?
That’s a song, don’t you hear the tune?

23 April 2013
Father told father held
me back forward
into difference.
I waited at the gold gate where he worked
to borrow as I called it
money he had little of.
Painful memories. A park
in winter a wolfish hunger
for too many things.
Too many mes.
A lost soul answers back
this too is paradise.

23 April 2013
One morning long ago in Indiana
I passed a prison where at that very hour
a prisoner was being put to death
by agents of the State, men just like me.
Not far from the big lake, and over that another country. We are caught
I thought by where we are,
where we happen to be, what we happen to see. His death somehow left less of me.

23 April 2013
If they travel north
lured just by light increasing
(as the professors say)
and find a cold spring
with barely a leaf to pluck
did the light lie?
Or does it have nothing to do
with anything really but
intricate desire deep
inside their souls
to be elsewhere in a rush
of dark or light or heat or cold.

23 April 2013
These little things we listened to
an hour of dark splendor
snatching language from its meaning
snatching sunshine from the sundial
setting storm clouds loose inside our clothes,
oh mother me more, we cried,
how can a bird be so big,
how can the sky be so close?

23 April 2013  (Scriabin’s 2$^{nd}$ Symphony)
Of course I’m sentimental
I’m made of bread and wine
like any Christian, made
of desert wanderings like any Jew —
everything feeds me, everything slays me,
everything has a meaning
and there’s only me to understand.
How can I leave anything unloved?

23 April 2013
Call the world
the multitask
and do it.
You can.
Your eyes
are the same size
as the sky.

23 April 2013
For I have read the words
I found them written
in dark places but they made me see
I signed them out for you,
birthday of a new idea
old music kissing the nape of your neck
soft and fresh, you all you from the bath.

23 April 2013