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A shaft of light came through the roof
I woke and heard the geese cry overhead.
Some things are easy to grow.
In the garden.
Some things sing.

In the dream we spent
a long time just talking.
Then she was late for class
and I was too, I went,
a teacher sadder than his students,
but then in a factory
they give me lots of things,
boxes and a bag to put them in—
surely in dreams
things are even easier sometimes
but then you wake up sad,
all of them lost now,
even her smile.

15 September 2013
How to make engines run backwards
and resorb all the products they once spewed,
a Luddite scheme, reset the pacemaker
in the Pleistocene,
check the heart beat of the aurochs,
eliminate potash from human diet
so we stop thinking, scheming.
Read more write less.
Teach every child Latin and
Greek then drown all the books.

15 September 2013
A word stands for so much.
Any word.
Its unity is made up of so many pieces.
Like that great vase
of rare lapis lazuli
you think at first
is made from a single block.

I don’t mean phonology
and segments and nuances, I mean
the million apperceptions
hidden in the notion the
word tries to summarize,
refer to, that
particular word, tree,
flower. Woman.

And each word has a vast population
and the power of all its constituents
to mean and mean
until we finally understand.

15 September 2013
Above the waterfall
still summer
but some of the leaves
don’t know it

I watch one tumble
from a high maple
across the bank
all the way down

into the quickness
below, less
than a second before
it has knowledge of

the catastrophe of cataract
and it has gone
a pioneer of autumn
a quick lover lost.

(13September 2013, Shafer)
15.IX.13
Call for the drummer
climb up the stairs
meet his secretary
on her way down

she leads you up
still looking for him
you stand on the roof
together, you see

swift moving water
what a view, you say
what is that body
of water why not say

river, before
you can correct yourself
she’s there, way down
there, up to her hips

in it, all that
swift silvery urban
river with civilized
conditions round her
houses and temples in and banks
you can hardly hear her
so loud this sudden
distance you feel

she’s talking but no
sense of what she says
could it be about time
or what you really mean.

16 September 2013
Jagged narratives
of the very poor.

Elastic waistband
on sticky tummy skin,

everything leaves a mark
of where you’ve been,

once you climbed
up onto someone’s roof

and the sky hit your head,
you carry the bruise

to this day, you call it
your hair, sing

sang sung
you learned in school

but never could
but god could you hum.

16 September 2013
Sudden abundance rose of Sharon on the north side, paucity yesterday on the south side of the house, nothing is too small for geography. Not everything is everywhere. Except for us.

16 September 2013
The star I draw honors my father.
I want you to know this,
the number of words honors my mother
who one day asked me if someday
I could write something
she could understand,
she having no habit of reading.
I’m still trying. But the star,
unicursal pentagram, he taught me
to draw I place between
one try for her and the next
so I remember them both.

16 September 2013
Come close to needs, begin —
How afterlight! How small!
But the smuggest Park Slope can’t
exsanguinate a rutabaga
with all the Swedish movies in the world
Annika! Ingmar! Rain
on the botanic garden, pink’s
always better when you’re wet.
Seeds! Spiracles! Lollardy
rearing up again, no respect
for Ludd or Lady, buzz tweet
chirp the messages keep coming,
a sandstorm from Sheepshead,
Caruso cantante nella Luna Park
the old ways sneak back
slowly to us, sounding to us again
amor ti vieta I hear you
actually talking to me
from the other room, the one
all windows and no door,
when you’re there
you can only see the sea.

16 September 2013
The voice spoke
from inside my chest
as I was just lying there,
no desk, no pen
no waking consciousness,
only the deep will
of what runs any life

and then it spoke.
A foreign word
as I’d expect,
no sense to it,
but presence, that
other other in me
with a voice not my own
suddenly mine
by right of hearing,
the inside
condescending to be heard.
Or it was native after all
and I the foreigner.

17 September 2013
I exaggerate the urgency
and wouldn’t you?
Only so many breaths
left in the horn
and so much Brahms.

We were beasts before
and now are sailors
swamped in the sea we made,

built for ourselves
out of sweat and tears —
nothing gives pleasure but work.

17 September 2013
= = = = =

I touched you
when I shouldn’t,
mountain, you were rough
and cold and some old
water trickled down
I also drank.
I think I have
no right to anything
but you. Because
you are the first
person I tried to know.

17 September 2013
Listen to the lamp post
it will explain the soft bodies
of all who leaned against it
seeking shelter from gravity,
it will illuminate your night
with stories of the hair
clipped, luxuriant, faded,
gleaming — it shone down on
in its career. For everything
is paying attention
all the time. Only we
ever topple over
in this swoon of sleep
or still upright succumb
to a Scottish *dwam* and stand
mindless at noon.
The lamp post knows.

18 September 2013
Just trying to find
out what happened
miracle enough
can’t see your dance moves
stand our distances
a blue satin something
all we ever remember
when we were we
and other songs.

Among the music
nobody knows.

18 September 2013\
Or afterwards is a kind of liberty.
Here is what we will do
we will do

comfort needs more than this
a rubber band a codicil
to God’s will, this testament
of your eyes gleaming in the dark

I follow you up the stairs
trying to be somebody else
at last the light changes.

18 September 2013\
Awesome possum
not as many
as they used to be.

1960 possum raccoon frog pheasant muskrat
1990 fox vulture wolf
2010 cougar fisher bear

not so many any
as we are.

* 

What we are doing, and what they are doing.
The long, strange, symbiosis/war
among the species.

It’s not all our fault
only because fault
is a poor word for necessity.

Each beast its own nature —
can we change it to wield our own
can we change the weird we dree?
The sharing goes with the Darwin business
the life on earth and all that mystery,
the beautiful illusion that intrigues us still,
me too though I know almost better.

18 September 2013