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THE ANIMAL

(2-Ix)

Day of your animal
day of your dark

you knew th wharves
before you knew the waves

the ocean was your animal

the separations began then
when all the cars were black
they all moved inland
and everyone was strange

the smell of country

seemed a world made
from old paper and barbed wire and trees

fences

suppose the whole thing was about waiting.
2.

Who needs to be a child.
Her big eyes and long hair
reminded him of something

der in a clearing then what
overcoming fear by consciousness
winter smell of cardamom

3.

Coming home from the margin
meaning.

There were dogs an accident
side of the road a car on fire
only the frame intact
inside just flame
and people watching.

Nothing is easy.
All the while something else
he was sure he should be doing
not just being here.

Or maybe just being here.
But that was hard, is hard,
all the legions of the Persians
drawn up around the holy
places in his head.
The temple stormed.
And the Romans were no better/

No children ever let in
and the priests groaned like the animals they slew.

The sacrifice.
Livestock. Sad word
for the about to die.

4.
And being home’s another book.
Some people knew how to stop
reading halfway through
Not he. To every book
its end. He stumbles
into vacancy.

But that too was home.
Big cardboard carton
with a target crayoned on it.
An arrow flying over the field.

Anything can be the goal.
Any word the bow.

24 May 2013
Waiting for the near to veer
tide-turn from the green
towards the dark permissions.

Sluggard rises, ascends
each local Everest of hours
till he can close his eyes
again on sacred emptiness
inside to cherish there
and stare the whole day
everlastingly mid-flight
and create his own singular night.

24 May 2013
A WAKING QUIET AS SLEEP

And what will say?
Spiraea exuberant white
by the side door
this year and this year
the great locust trees along
the river road have blossomed
more than I have ever seen
in fifty years. Whose fault
was my long ignorance.

25 May 2013
Waiting is a kind of kneeling before an altar

quiet altar made of time

alone (see Exodus, an hour is the *unhewn stone*)

gazing at the clouds or cloudless sy and listening,

never asking always listening. This is my religion.

25 May 2013
Plastic flowers
remind me of pianos,
the noble effort
of those strange machines
to sound like us,
to sing in our voices
the things we mean.
My eyes undeceived
are well pleased
this cold morning by
these sky-blue hydrangeas
that will never fade.
Or not till all our colors do.

25 May 2013

(Listening to a transcription for two pianos of Liszt’s Mazeppa)
FEUX D’ARTIFICE

After the white explosion
a single light turns
into a flock of silver birds

who settle slowly beyond the trees
down onto the river
to teach the water the name of fire.

26 May 2013
Four months of talking
hardly listening
come to an end.
And conversely.
The school closes
the throat is dry
the leaves ate green.
Hard to make this
clear in Russian
but that’s where we are
at last, a land with no
definite article
just clouds in the sky.

26 May 2013
Beginning at the end again
I understand you best
by looking out at the rain
out there where the changes live
the lilac people who rule the world
flowers and dancers.

(26 May 2013)
What does the bee know?  She
rules the lines of light
that string the world together

You get home faster
when you’re everywhere

An old book says that all
things on earth were born on earth
except these three: asbestos,
wheat, the honeybee.

But I think I too
am from a distant place
so strange everything seems
strange magical things

irises, clouds in a blue sky,
humming bees.

26 May 2013
OLD FIRE

Flame on the candle
votive lamp
going for hours
tongue of flame
speaking the body’s
language out there

in praise of mind
red glass
sacred heart Buddha voice

the candle has been burning since morning
the flame is young the fire old
it has been burning
since the beginning of the world

old fire old fire
marrow bone
horse’s mane
remembering the shape of the wind.

26 May 2013
SUNG IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

1. Hold the note till we hear him—
because she jogged past the setting sun
declaring a silhouette
that lingered in the forest,
became a tree

and Apollo wept.
No myth ever really leaves the mouth.

2. You gave me this instrument
I found the stone myself

The face I carve therein
can only be his own.

3. Open the window.
We’re hearing excerpts
from the long opera of the world,
all the tedious dialogue left out,
only the bird songs left in,
only trees answering the wind.

26 May 2013
THE ROAD

I want to watch you walking up the road.
It is moonlight it is country,
I trail behind you a hundred feet or so,
you’re walking slowly it is country, it is moonlight,
I know it’s you, you’re carrying something a flask or bundle under your left arm propped on your hip.
I think it is milk (country milk, moon milk)
I keep my distance you’re safe, I can feel the air that passes round you come to meet me,
I feel the safety of you walking slowly, snug on the empty road, meadows around you, no forests, moonlight,
is it milk you carry
or is it something else,
something I don’t know
how to remember?

26 May 2013
The hand of the woodpecker
woman climbing easy out of earth
you can tell a jogger by the way he drives his car
when the blossoms have fallen from the apple tree
there is a long silence called summer
there are five of us waiting to take hold
so many me to see
she saw me at my weakest when I had a past
a strong person has no history
the vaporetto took us to the Arsenale
if rich people had the sense to buy no art
art would be healed in a generation
it should be illegal to sell a work of art you haven’t made
yourself, it is signing someone else’s name
black magic rises from five fingers or one bird.

27 May 2013