5-2013

mayH2013

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Wherever we go
nothing but testimony

and then the sky was blue
what could we do

I have sung so many arias
arias without operas

tragedies without stories
glory of grief

I call the sky to witness
the things you’ve seen

are what I meant
and that’s an aria too

one more high C

on the ice floe drifting north.

27 May 2013
Could you take a dislike to a man
from the shape of the numbers he writes?

Can you take the auspices of the day
from the sound of the coffeepot perking?

Will all these trees crowding in around me
finally agree?

27 May 2013
I demand of myself

a certain number of mistakes,

a choir singing away

long after the Mass has ended.

27 May 2013
It has no past
no more than a flute
wind out there breath in here
is there a difference?

27 May 2013
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Wait, wait again
be a tree for me
or a star, a star
over there far,
far, distance is all.
Distance is all.
How far is a tree.
How long have you traveled
to be so far.
This far. This tree.
This tree to me.

28 May 2013
IF I LET MYSELF LISTEN TO MUSIC

But I don’t listen
I write against it
always, stumm

stumm but setting
words against tones,
sentences against such
tunes or even daring
audibly to pose
a Seventh voice to the
ricecare’s fugue,

I write so much I can’t hear.

I write so I don’t hear.

Or I would perish from the sound alone.

28 May 2013
EVERY POEM IS A DUET

Come to the window

and see the house outside

coming closer

to surround us with its quiet

order, tree after tree.

28 May 2013
The night between cold and hot
is where the living lives.

Her collage of the white lion
leaping out of the black trees
opens my lips. I speak

I hear the bottom of the sea.

Her roar.

28 May 2013 (Rhinebeck)
1.

Leaden light full of angeling
the metal lead is when the light
busies itself with matter
so deep it sinks in

among the common elements
iron in the blood

2.

The temperature reads us.
We trust in numbers
we created them
our fertile daughters, sons.
Or they created us.
3.

Listen to the colors
if you really want to know

full of matter lacrimae rerum

even the cloud is sad

the quiet things around us

heal all they can.

4,

You came in the night
to shine my leaves.

Then the pale inspiration
crept up the sky.

Put me to sleep

better to remember

mistletoe swived up the oak

Chaucer at Gravesend measured the tide
for no purpose but his curiosity

his playful reverence maybe

for the wet hem of God.

And then all this was just a tree.

5.

Sometimes the sun comes out and lifts the wind

a man could lean on his fence in such weather

eager it might be for a woman to pass

her shape distant against the greenery

something must come of all this what is your name?

6.

So any random day

though none is random

rehearses the stages

of the alchemic work.

Goes through the colors—

a sacred day starts
with the dusk before
ends with luminous sunset
gold sun fat on horizon—
the colors show you how to shunt your mind
through all the phases of the Opus
some of them violent, wipe-out,
white from above,
a pure white cloud abates your grief.

Listen to the colors I said
and knew not what I meant
and then the colors told me
until I talked too much to listen.
A tidal river first home of humankind.

29 May 2013
Local amazements
ring around the neck
six Saxons clambering through the surf
women-ones, not boy warriors,
blond bashers anyhow
out of the green sea.
on to the greener shore
pricked with pink flowers
the way late spring does
a month or more of me
makes me a preacher.

29 May 2013