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The sacred
gometry of our adorations
wind in the bushes

branch brushes windowscreen
and light curves round us
smooth as Praxiteles
Lady Light my lucent lover—

then he was silent
as if he had prayed
and waited for his prayer to rise
efficacious on the morning air
safe before that heart of noon
—the noon who is No One—

when (as Powys warned us)
all prayer falls into fire and is not heard.

So he was silent
as if waiting.
Deer faltered down the hill
to see what was for them
in all this flurry of bright wishing
here now
that the snow had finally melted
to browse on time
to graze the light
and if we could as if we could
grow fat on sheer lucidity.
How vague this flesh
whose outline tells so much—

we are just silhouettes
each of us a symbol
of an identity just beyond our reach.

14 March 2013
The trees need care
the secret glances of the citizens
even though the citizens
go home and sit on their sofas

are enough to affright the nurserymen
arborists, the children hired
to clamber into fruit trees and
with curved knives and hooks dismiss

irregularity of silhouettes
that bane of householders.
Everything must dome
or must spire. And old

apple trees get beaten by
old men in March with sticks
to wake the fructiferous
tentities deep in the wood,

the goddess Pomona herself
asleep on her left side,
throng of young women in scarlet gowns
approaching her altar with bright knives.

15 March 2013
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Nothing in common
but their bodies
was enough to run
beside beside
the little river
in their neighbor wood
and run back, morning jaunt, perils of amity
to be a friend is keep pace up the hill.
And every road is up
and everyone is you
and I am no one.

15 March 2013
Hide the deer in the woods
hide the woods in a map
hide the map in your pocket
folded six times carefully
as a just ended song, hide
your pocket in someone’s coat,
hide someone in the sun.
This is the face of the day,
one more of them, the last
for all you know. So talk
your way out of the house
mutter the mantra that
starts the car and go
little brother, go.

15 March 2013
NUMBER THEORY

Comfortable with silence
things to listen
to, things
to begin.

OK, that was zero,
that was some birds
names too sacred to say
eating things from grass
or from the road
and sitting on fences and flying away.

Maybe that was one
the mother told you you were
how could there be more than you
for instance, for instance
leaves on the trees

but there are no leaves
because this is three
is winter still and cold
bones every night
the sun like tired retirees
coming north slowly for Pesach

because the weather is
a monotheist plot
where next week will
always be better, next
life will be heaven

but we rationals know better
it all is magic
and magic works!
action at a distance
the will works its way into the world
worm by lattice
crystal fracture of the morning light

or how many faces
can I have to watch you
you dance again
you again whom I have studied
centuries now curve by mantissa
the lovely shape of leaving a door
open in the sky

the sky after all.

16 March 2013
Petrel. Never saw one.
Albatross either.
A poem flew by my window
chased by a hawk.

Hawk I know,
they’re high, they squeal
and plummet down,
one once
crashed into the window
next door, the poem
was gone by then
with all the other
little birds that hurt
no one, peck around
sing a little and fly away.
Touch me and I will appear
I take the form of a copper lamp
with a smoky purple flame
nibbling on an oil-soaked wick.

I light your room. You smell
the rapture in my oil, essence
of fire and continuity. You move
me round your spaces.

When we’re tired of playing
you blow me out. I seem
to disappear then. But a flame
once kindled is always waiting,

right here, in the air, waiting for you.

16 March 2013
Why are red cars?
Kid time only firemen had.
Now lots. They hurt my eyes when parked in green they shine.

16 March 2013
Big enough to remember
a strike in your own hand
and a girl bleeding—
and never
get over the shame

or chalk on a blue wool coat back—
how can a man ever know
the mind of the child he was?

Who were those people I was being?
no connection with their hopes and deeds
except the shame, their shadow—

shame for the nice not just the nasty
shame for foods and fantasies
xap pistols and a curveball

grazing the strike zone, shame
for all the shame I felt, fear,
rebelliousness and sullen silence

and one day I kicked my father’s shin.

17 March 2013
I put a red coat on
and meant the king.

I was tired of invisible
masters and wanted one

with a gold hat on his head
and coins tumbling from his fingers

I was tired of bankers and brokers
and businessmen running the show

I wanted a glorious fool
so I could know the face of him

who sends me out to thirst
and die in old Afghanistan.

17 March 2013
Willing the best
the stone set
on the table.
Sacrilege—stone on wood.
Sacrifice—wood on stone.
Lift up your arms
as if you were a funnel
and the whole sky full of light
poured down into you.
Then say her name.

17 March 2013
Straight from dream
into the day’s disorder
but I had no dreams
waking up a horncall
a phonecall unanswered
a day I didn’t answer
catholic guilt for that
all I must have missed
of you a squeeze above
the ears mastoid moment
fear of what’s to come
and in Irish fear is a man.

18 March 2013
Pen come back to hand
song come back to tongue
this is how magic starts
but where it goes
is that comfortable country
nobody knows.
And in our touchable
bodies know only this
faerie, to live with
passion is live for all.

18 March 2013
AGORA

Waiting for the heat to come again

The balance
understands the fingertip

Cars collect sunshine. Fact.

Every tree
remembers me
knows
I was the one.

But obeying the road
sometimes means leaving it

Faltering sunlight imagines me
Rude breakers disassemble sandy beaches

I who speak
was once a storm.

18 March 2013
Embarrassed by remember
a mirror
is a cautery for hope.

18 March 2013
ON THE DAY ONE K’ANIL

1.
Rabbit shy four color corn
I eat this kernel now
that hides your heart
now you live in me too
not just yourself

2.
Red Yellow Blueblack White
these are distinctions
only the soul knows

the soul
needs colors—the rest
of me makes do with thinking.

3.
You think you’re shy
you think you wear clothes
to shield your nakedness.
Not so. You wear colors.
Cloth, leather, fur
are just accidents
that the light happened to
coming to find you.
The light finds you.
The colors shield you from the mind.

4.
Beginning to remember again
the beaches of Portugal
they say have black sand
white bodies on them
slowly reddening under theyellow sun/
I think of this for no reason—
we are food for somebody else
but never learn who, we never
get to turn the page and find
where the answer is, printed
clear in black on white,
cui bono out there we be.
5.
But I am shy.
I want you to walk
all around me
fiddling with this and that.

When I was a kid
I wanted to be a bridge
over a river
full of harbor seals

or anything bright red.
Find me for me, I’m lost
in what I almost
remember I remember.

19 March 2013
You held me tight
and spoke about chastity,
ice on the roads, cries
of different birds, how
to tell one from another,
you from me for example
or when hip finds hand
who touches whom?

19 March 2013