Warp the one eye
rainstorm
close to moondark—who
breathes such thunder in
and then lets speak?

Whose breast
a resting place?
For we were best
before we were born
the most we can hope
a mooring for the night
maybe a dream
where an ancestor comes
stands clear before us
and tells us what we know
already but now
we know we’re not alone
but in that company
is there one
who really knows
how to be more than I am?
Or they all know
and I know too—
will I be brave enough
to bite the fruit I know?
These weird globes
whose shadows even
fall on this window
when the sun sets
and I’m left alone
with what I think I know.
Some other place.
An animal with stripes.
A man on a tractor.
The wagonload of cauliflowers.
See, there are other people —
autistic aubades
not even never.

14-15 August 2012
AMERICA

That low-lying land on the horizon
is America. Twenty miles is far away.
Ocean comes between
and ocean is its own.
The sun’s broken light
the colors of our politics.
How to be Eden eludes.
How even to be now is hard.
And here. One glimpse
of a postcard sunset
from a few miles out at sea
and all my hope springs up again —
this coast could be the first time.
We could still be on our way.

14-15 August 2012
Or throw away the only thing
links you to the past —
onionskin carbon of a letter never sent—
the obsolete technologies of touch

—and where are you now?
I thought you were my woman
he said and she said I’m nobody’s
so he said I told you you were mine.

And so it went, the old
thomistic logic of the schoolyard
I can pee further up the wall than you

but your mother drives a green convertible

and nobody really likes anybody,
have you noticed, even though some
of them now and then fall in love
that changes nothing, just everything.

Remember we used to want things to be fair?

15 August 2012
AUTORITRATTO

Bark of the wet trees
(bark could be of a fox or a maple)
wet bark of the tree
(only a surrealist would think of foxes)
((but anybody would think first of dogs))
(((I never think of dogs, I don’t even use the word)))
so I’m left looking at this mottled surface
upright, blotchy, part eroded bark, part
of the splotching is sunlight, not much,
more rain coming, thank goodness, not
very fond of sunshine either
(((what a monster!)))

15 August 2012
This feather I carry from book to book.
I call it moving, and I can count its barbs
if I so choose—when I riffle through them
gently it looks as if in some small world it’s raining.

15.viii.12
COMMENSALS

They share our table
beasts of our field
apes who were men once—
evolution not a one-way street
Darwin a typical 19th century
ameliorist, progress, progress,
progress, as if time
were a simple river
carrying us all along
to some single future
luminous by preference.
But apes were men once —
and with our ridiculous Olympics we
mourn our lost agility of
tree branch and cunning toes.

But time is no river,
time is lateral, flux and reflux,
time is difference,
and apes were men who lost the way
or god help us chose another—
I shudder at my shame.

16 August 2012
FENCES

1.
How hard it is
the settlement around our ears
the polity

    Zaun ‘fence’ —> town

‘the fenced-in place’—

town is terror and protection.

No wonder the no-account streets
of Red Hook nighttime scary seen,
“now we’re all locked in for the night”
said the ghost in the story—
empty midnight streets are shouting,
I lock myself in the woods
beast loneness

    growl of perpetual adoration—

no beasts are atheists—
oh if we could only know
the god of deer and the god of crow
    —perfect replicas of our copycat minds—
I have prayed to the god of woman
that I might be more than a man.
2.
Politics. Stercor.
The dungheap of the state
breeding “leaders,”
maggots of the mind.

3.
Writing the thing is need.
Some scare.
What can I do?
I can make you.

4.
Each one says that
to his young fere—
old words best for young men,
saves them from whatever.
Sharp old words,
a little smelly, a little whiskery.

5.
Let me tell you what to do
till I am you
and you are me
and I can live again
millenniums of you.

6.
Enable angel. Fill up time—
only we can
make time happen.
An angel’s yesterday is tomorrow.

7.
Smelly? Simplicities
of biologic stance.
The scientific method
wearing old clothes.

8.
Come play with me
before it’s time to go.
After forever
there is no bedding down,
no campfire on the hilltops,
no skin.
9.
We are so hot for imprisonment.
If you leave out all the people in
schools, jails, prisons, hospitals, hospices,
asylums, sanatoriums, reform schools, housing projects,
how many actual free agents are left?
Now leave out the 9 to 5 workers and commuters,
how many now? One old man cursing in the woods.
A gaggle of stoners giggling on the beach.

10.
Don’t fence me in.
As they used to sing.
Before they did.

11.
Politicians try to trap your mind.
Make you think about them—
that’s all they need.
The mental energies of you,
love or hate, bless or blame,
doesn’t matter, the energy’s the same.
Don’t think about them—
they steal enough from us already
without making us waste our minds
on opinions, on issues
we cannot hope to sway.
Unless we become they.

12.
The opening obvious
but where does it go?
A door leads nowhere—
it opens and closes.
It reminds you of nothing.
It is a silent mirror.
Have you ever really found a door?
Have you ever gone in?

16 August 2012
The inner gypsy
rules my eye—
I see what you hold
holds you,
your future already
fumbling with hearts
and spades—things
will touch you
till you scream.
Then you’ll deal
another hand, another
future bothers me
to see—I don’t want
to know what’s coming
to you. I close
my eyes to be free.

16 August 2012
Sights engraved in mind
not exactly memory
as if scurrying from branch
to branch there’s always
an image of a branch
reaching out to the image
of your hand, a hand.
And so she stood
in the doorway
at the top of the stairs
by the bridge over Tannery Brook
a kingfisher soared up from the stream.

16 August 2012
WAITING IS ITSELF AN ANSWER

maybe.  The train
may never come,
empty platform
with one hard bench
down there may be the
actual, the whole reality.
Below the ground
you hear things far away
things you’re not supposed to hear,
up the tunnel from which winds
sometimes pretend an arrival
but not yet.  Tubes
under the earth.  Empty
platform, tile walls,
nameplates with a number
on each, same number
meaning nothing but a gesture
at a grid somewhere up there.
Few primes. No irrationals.
An empty bench, empty numerals
trying to mean something
to me.  I am alone
dreading any other.
Terror of what might come
intrude on my silence,
something too much like me,
too different. Come
to infest my emptiness.
Why am I here and not elsewhere, where is there anywhere to go?
No train. Sounds far off
sounds close, the come
and the go of things
that left me here. Poor me.
This silent place
below all sounds.
Once there was a bird,
a pigeon thing down here
with me, not long,
flew somewhere away
and maybe out, rats
ran between the tracks.
the third rail hums.
Or is it the light.
Sound of danger.
There are rooms
way down there
in the tunnel off the tracks,
strange rooms, who
goes on there, once
or twice I’ve seen the cavemouth
as the train lurched past.
And that too was empty.
When there were trains.
Now only sounds.
Say yes  Tell me
I have told you
enough of what it feels
to be me.

Let me
be quiet as cement
or tile, cool numbers,
enamel, steel,
walls.  I walk
along the platform’s edge,
the pure electricity
waiting down below,
dirty trench through which
the clean power flows.
It brings the train
notionally.  It is grammatical.
It is like religion
running on for centuries
furred over ever deeper
with time’s scum.
It does not come.
I go to the bench
I sit, book in my hands,
I try to read,
the book has extra pages
in it, words
no author ever wrote,
the text from elsewhere—
magic spells, brief lives
of the prodigals, I lisp
a magic formula
and nothing happens.
I speak another, louder,
shout it up the tunnel
down the vaulted overhang
and nothing happens.
Or everything does.
With these words
the world creates itself
again. Have I made
all this happen?
Isn’t there anybody else?
Is this present moment
the actual future of no past
suddenly inhabited?
This story is too early
to tell. Who made you?
asked the catechism,
every word a lie.

16 August 2012