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When you buy lilies at the florist
glass vase full of them, some
of them spread wide, many
still unopened, in green capsules,
their sheaths. Wait
for those flowers to open. Sometimes
four or five days go by
before one does—by then
some of the early generous ones
are fading, ruffled at petal edge
reminding you of your own grief.
Still, like many sad things,
beautiful. All this emotion,
things that live in dirt and die in houses,
why are you so beautiful?
What is this message that pierces
even through sorrrpw, and *proclaims* ?

22 August 2014

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**Cars haul boats
behind them to the river,**

**at the marina
teach them to swim.**

**Mother car and boaty chick
Often bigger than she is.**

**Like a baby sparrow.
I who am outside nature
see all these things as strange,
comparable even, the way
the sun is a light bulb
moved by an unknown hand
across the ceiling.**

It all is nature or none of it is.

22 August 2014

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**A garden
is symmetry,**

**a song
spilled from the Middle Ages
into our average age,**

**a box of growing,
God painting the earth
by numbers,
 your hands.**

**22 August 2014
Alford, Mass.**

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**The pool a mouth
inside a smile —**

**yellow!
 enshrined
in green,
 a college of color.**

**I fail all my courses,
I run away with
the girl across the aisle.**

**22 August 2014
Alford, Mass.**

=====

**Where is the bedroom
where is the wine,
I'm lost in the kitchen
without an appetite**

**but there are sailors hurrying
through the trees
singing songs in Russian—**

wouldn't you?

**22 August 2014
Alford, Mass.**

=====

**Valiant precursors
heron in a stream**

**domestic arrangements
in the clouds above**

**in a house haunted
only by itself**

**you hear footsteps when
you turn the faucet on**

**music comes up
the cellar stairs**

**it sounds like Mozart snickering
I run away clumsy through the trees.**

23 August 2014

= THE RESIDENCES

A plastic spoon does wonders
to tame a po-mo house,
a messy kitchen is like a bird
song at twilight although this
is a *comparison*, a bad thing
in this era of embattled
identities none too definite.
As I was saying (and I is a simple
vector of verbal agitation,
no actual person or living thing
is implied by this proposition)
as I was saying, we need
to flense those overcrowded tumuli
left over from the ancient kings
we were (yes, you) yesterday
before the furniture marched in
from the woods and cowed us
(yes, you) with their bland, blond
immobile stares. there.
And there. In his boring dream
he visited again his boss's house
and found every room empty
newly painted white, but through
a closed white door he heard
his boss's voice talk calm to him
discussing future production
plans employees learn to tolerate

**if not embrace. Only the voice.
Then he woke up ignorant,
stuck in his own house
with the bedpost chewing his ankle
like the usual black dog of dream.**

24 August 2014

AGITPROP

**History is a summer sweat—
you think it will never change
then someone tells you
what to do. What to think.
How to feel about alien
identities. Government
governs by the senses
not by sense. No logic
outwits drum beats,
naked bodies, repetition.
And here we be, brain
sweaty with influences,
no idea but all the feigned
stimuli, the conditioned
responses, how sweet we are,
lost in obedience. Somehow
unseat the state, somehow
start again — two little
desperate adverbs up against
the prisons and armies and believers.**

24 August 2014

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**I't not sure which is the opening
cave mouth, cinema, cellar door
dark places always luring in—
come down with me and apprehend
the last measured twilight of the world.
We'll be alone and try at last
to understand what dark is for.**

24 August 2014

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**Break the measure
guess how much
wine you need to say
all the solemn Masses
yet to come,
your oily fingers
hungry for that other bread.**

24 August 2014

= = = = =

**I wish I could begin each day
by telling a story**

**even if it's only
the same one always**

only with different words.

24.VIII.14

HORATIAN ODE ON THE END OF AUGUST

Native splendor
as of an organ played
the lines breathe longer
and every word stands in for some other

this is celadon this is the mystery
of spring leaf true all winter
and it warms the fingers
like flowers nower

for it is late summer and the aster's
blue and yellow susans' eyes stare
everywhere, the morning road is ivory,
a blue hat's on everybody's head

and the fair is over, the ferris wheel
stops flirting with the sky, we go back
to pretending to be serious as for
a whole week we pretended to have fun

don't look too closely at this 'we'
who's speaking, who is speaking
by the bodega, the yoga studio, poor man's
Laundromat, yes, that's the one

yes all the cars those comfy wheelchairs
carting us to preposterous destinations
long words with not much meaning
the church, the synagogue, the sushi bar

such chumps we are, in rubble of the soul
still prancing up the avenue, even dancing
o I dissemble priesthood in my passion
how many of us drivers really love our jobs

go back and start again forgiveness
the sky is dusty too
let the children play with mud again
so they can breathe their fathers' breath in it

something white happens to the world
I forget my lines all the time
why don't they drag me off the stage
am I a beast they fear will bite, I'll not,

no, start again again, be a stupid flower
smitten dumb by your own beauty
reflected back at you from all our eyes
glorious triumph of the obvious

when blue pierces suddenly through green
something wonderful befalls us—
if I were any good at this
I would tell you what it is.

25 August 2014

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**The little loves
that mess with all the others,
kisses and tongue tips
branches of wine
and who goes there?
in one more worn-out heart.**

25 August 2014

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**Sun on the lawn
should be enough to say**

**fruit tree, maybe, some
deep blue New York asters—**

**keep talking, buster,
you'll never get there**

**no crime in trying—
or lie there on the grass**

**and let it carry you there
all by itself**

**till you look up and whisper
so that's where this is.**

25 August 2014

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Settembrini had only one pair of pants. The poverty of the learned classes is tragic, and usually ignored. Hans Castorp for instance noticed them often, the pants, with amusement and something like affection but never apparently thought to buy the poor man another pair or give him some money to buy his own. He could have afforded it. They all could have, those comfortable invalids of the Magic Mountain. I know it's just a book but still it grieves me, galls me, the way people make no move to make other people happy. "If you love your priests, keep them poor"—that maxim must be working here, scholars and poets, alchemists and Gypsies, these must be our holy men, we smile and keep our distance. But my eyes get weepy thinking of those threadbare shapeless pants.

26 August 2014

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**Serenity
is only mind.
The force the forced
fall outside.
The way we get
to know other people,
and free of desire
the way we let them go**

26 August 2014

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**How rare are brown cars
rainless gutter
under the old eaves,
sparrows parched—
catastrophe
is very small, a little
bit of ash.**

26 August 2014

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I am writing this
to your left hip
and the stray hair
that swirls round
your right cheek
in this mild breeze
of time. I am not
writing to you,
there is no you yet,
I broke the glass
that had your picture
deep inside it,
faint sea-green of old
Syrian glass, flows
a millimeter every
thousand years,
even the smashed
pieces go on flowing,
everything is liquid
in this world, I forgot
your name but remember
the firm of flesh
the floating hair,
gravity and levity
return me to the earth,
That's who I'm writing to,
not you, are you

**the earth? I'm writing
to the air that one day
may finally reach the ears
of someone who
might turn into you.
You. Touch me,
I've lost all the names.**

27 August 2014

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**Does music mean me?
I asked the ice cubes
who make such lean
happy noises in their
bucket, in my glass.
Do all sounds mean me?
We live inside a strange
auditorium, no way out,
ignore sounds to our
peril. Every noise
may be a word in
a language we almost
forgot as we grew up.**

27 August 2014