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Hate to live with my mind on something else
but all artists are superstitious
Are you an artist then? Behold,
I am the figure of a reproachful wife
Giulio Romano made me to stand
silently for sixteen years and frown
at mankind with my loveliness, so like
the artist is his handiwork, you know?
But you are a man and far from comely
as such a grieving dame must seem
where does this artist business come from?

It comes from something else.
Art is something else
locked in the dungeon of poor this—
release me, o fair deliverer!
that’s what I hear from every creature
every blunt commodity in your economy
o if you love me set me free. So you
at peace in your summer morning kayak
take pleasure in this marshy world, eiders
camping by the shore—but I, with all this
and elsewhere churning in my head
must launch this and a thousand other vessels
in a thousand seas and see where each one goes.
Art is the opposite of religion
since faith and cult are always about being here
and art is the other thing, left over,
the irritant that frictions up your night
into tellable constellations.
I don’t know what it is but just one day
I too would fancy a mute canoe.
But this is my destiny, my ruin is my loveliness.
Reality is superstition, do you understand me now,
it’s what’s left over. This real thing
in your hand is just the start of something else.

9 June 2010
Cuttyhunk
Set wandering. Squaw pale
wake early and often.
But once your eyes are open wide
go gallivanting through the kitchen.
Boiling water. Morning offering.

9 June 2010
ON THE DAY TWELVE-IX

Somebody born this day
has a lion head instead.
Born tomorrow
will have sparrow wings
and eagle meanings.

You are born at the single
intersection of impossibilities
where for a split second
something is possible—

you, adrift inside your mother
waiting, both of you,
your strange deliverance.
By the salt marsh
reeds tremble in the wind—
that’s where you learned beauty.

You try to make things that are there.
You have no secrets.
That is your secret.

9 June 2010
Cuttyhunk
But what if I’m too nice in the morning?

A snarl in sunshine
speaks me me.

9.VI.10
EVERYTHING HAS BEEN REVEALED

and I’m still working for revelations.
Why don’t you now behold what you beheld?
Is Vision just to glimpse then look away?

But *that* which I saw was true
of that world in which I saw it—
this is this world
new today, a fresh-laid egg
much in need of cracking,
coaxing the inner phoenix free.
Or chicken. Or cockatrice.

9 June 2010
Cuttyhunk
THE CRAFT

We Slavemasons have strange symbols
we no longer understand.
They work, though, like charms.
Our arms.

9 June 2010
Now it can be ordinary again.
A sparrow on the railing
one of the uncountable
come to stand quietly
looking perhaps at me
through the what is the Latin for window?
*Per vitrium,* I’ll guess.
Each being lives behind glass.

9 June 2010
Cuttyhunk
Things take a turn for the worse.
Tragedy. The goat dies. The men sing.
Women feed portions of the meat to the singers.
With other bits of meat they do secret things.

Two thousand years later all of this somehow feels like philosophy they were up to.
We think as we please. We know better than to listen to those crazy witnesses, ourselves.

9 June 2010
A man deserves every day
a quarter-hour when he can hide from god
from all the gods, safe
in the silence of his ignorance.

It is a quiet place
half-inside and half across the room
or road or prairie,
half him and half no one.
A time when no one knows his name.

9 June 2010
Cuttyhunk
If I had a favorite place
which sea would it be?
The beach by the barges
like the sea’s own piazza
where old man Anthropos
sits and watches his
original country come
to reclaim him grain by grain.

9 June 2010
It is the sound
of it, of nothing,
moving fast
loud as a mirror
in a dark hallway,
who?

The sound
said it, wake
to be part of it,
something sweet always waiting
something that knows me
like a dream coming from inside
a long way I can hear it coming
though I do not know all the corridors
couloirs, miroirs, through which it comes,
now, to wake me.

Who knew that woman was down there?
We did not put her.
She is part of the place itself,
who knew she would smile at me so
in the huge space into which everything comes?

10 June 2010
A land of light above the sea
a calm dividing
in the neck of storm.

Sore throat. Words
hurt to write them down.
Wind’s whine, a wet dog.

10 June 2010
Cuttyhunk
A GULF FOR HEIDE HATRY

Imagine it thick in your own hair
your eyes stuck shut

you gouge your scummy finger
in your nose to break a way for air
the black snot won’t come out
you breathe a little, it whistles

it’s in your eyes now, burning
and your ears are stuffed with sludge now too
you can’t even hear yourself scream

and while you’re screaming
you’re thinking
if you can still think
that all this oil was leaf and meadow once,
turf and forest waving
millions and millions of years

all this was green life once
and even now the glistening black sludge
has a sheen of tree-brown in it
a sheen of green—
forget the pelicans and pretty ducks,
this is happening to you

you are the one
sealed in scum

you feel your scalp aching
your head trying to breathe
did you know we breathe through the skin?
only you can’t, not any more,
ever again,

your skin belongs to business now
this is the Midas touch of money
they trade in your skin on the bourse,
there is nothing left of the original you
you still are screaming
you make hardly any noise
your throat is choked with oil
you make only a little shushing noise
like money changing hands

you pray for the pelicans and the sea turtles
you pray for the ducks and cormorants
the beautiful anhinga
but this is happening to you
a tar-black seagull
wings still flapping
is stuck to your shoulders

you can’t breathe any more
waste your last breath on prayer

you pray for the pelicans
not sure if you’re praying for them or to them

pray to anything that seems alive
keep praying till you run out of air

and you are the pelican now.

10 June 2010
Cuttyhunk
Wind lets up. Fog slides closer.
Vineyard blur. Tall rain come
north to us across the sky.

How strange, like Narcissus,
rain raining on an empty ocean,
water knowing itself all the way down.

10 June 2010
Aucéan

Have you ever seen gold in sea-light
on a wild grey day and the waves
leap inward—you are inward—
and the gold in your wedding ring glows
with fierce dull (!) luster
as if calling the waves, come to me,
come to me, you chemical bride
come let me mind you
with my metal, our salts
we share already, you
from your deep streets
come to me now, bringing
your dowry, sal luminis,
to share your salt of light.

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This special link between gold-worn-by-human and the deep sea water—no lake knows it. Only here, the water riding in from Portugal to marry my hand.

10 June 2010
Barges Beach