REVELATIONS

Things wait for you too, old man,
up under Cumora, where
on a bad day you see Rochester
shoving its tower or two
up into the patient atheist air,

old man, why should I have
only one religion?
I can change religions
the way I change my shirt,
all of them I own fit me,

each has a color a texture
of its own that fit the time,
so today’s is blue for Zeus
the inheritor, usurper,
clever, many-formed,
lap-lord of the world,

and deep inside I smile
quietly the naked mind.

26 February 2009
This doesn’t say it.
A duck does,
quacking as she takes off
mildly from the reed-thronged pond,
I hear her voice also
in my sleep. And geese
at morning, low over the house.
Something is happening.

It sounds like the first
movement of the long concerto
is coming to an end.
Cadences of all things, soft
farewells. The holy interruption.

26 February 2009
Be in enough to be near me and let me understand before you go to earthy matters how far it is to be just here.

26 February 2009
S E M A

Dancing maybe.
Maybe not.
Maybe the impossible
love is just this

I want to be
inside you as you turn
as you are inside yourself
I would be

to know
what turning makes you know
right there
in the middle of your doing it

which maybe is no doing
at all, you are taken
by the will
you went to and said

Will me instead
and so it did and so
you are still turning
as inside you I too
in turn could know
Another as that
Other is no thing but
knowing you.

26 February 2009
What has ever answered?
The climate tried.
The weather, unrelenting.
But could we hear?

Whose fault
how we are made?

Remake the mind.
That’s all we have.
To do.

We are born this way.
But every now
then is a way out.
On the way to the real you.

26 February 2009
Every child must have her say
then it is really a piano.
The tulips tell her what to play
this little finger on that black key.

Suddenly she’s a lot older,
all her fingers quiet on white.
This is a raga too, this brittle silence
while she thinks of all the men

she always tried to keep from knowing.
Inside music it is not good to know.
Or too much. When it should all be
investigating her note by note.

Now she is young again,
her mind out the window while her hands
memorize Czerny one more time
and the sun goes down into an empty lawn.

Can it ever be this quiet again?
Old again, she searches in the sounds
for that stillness silence itself
no longer knows how to give.
Child, old, young—
that is the terrible
thing about music,
everybody in it

is the same age but only
some of them have learned
how to cry. And what on earth
does weeping have to do with anything?

26 February 2009
There are liberties
we still have to learn
to take with each other

that is what time
is for, to unpack
our local wills

and spread them out
all over the space
time gives us to explore.

26 February 2009
Give every instrument its say.
Every tool makes me guilty.

Nothing is as good as it could be,
everything is better than we need.

So we are rich and poor at once
confronting art. Especially

when we try to make it,
monarchs of universal language

stuck right now with only this.

26 February 2009
I had to write today’s poem
yesterday and God knows
who will speak tomorrow.

All this music must mean something—
a cat’s eyes gazing at emptiness.

And then I traced
your name on the steamed window glass
even the rain knows how to spell.

27 February 2009
Let the children be kind to him
when they pass his statue in the park—
Rebel  Philosopher  Priest

on his own two brazen feet,
a great man, a frown beneath the sky,
demanding something from the air.

This is me. I have stood
for centuries as a monument
to what I imagine I mean.

A name turns living desire
into a statue. An idea turns bronze.
Look what happened to me.

27 February 2009
Sympathetic pilgrims
choir as they go—
o how holy every other place is
that’s far from here.

In the chapel over the hill
God hears you clearer,
heals you quicker
than your old parish church.

27 February 2009
Unpaid beginnings—

letter cronies
lying in far beds.

Too much ink on the paper
too little suffering.

27 February 2009
Imagine a man walking in the sunshine
and then a woman praying to the moon.

Don’t you believe anything? Imagine
a coat on the back of a chair, a desk
swept clean by the maidenly wind

and then who’s in the room? Get it straight,
there’s nothing here but us houses

and some folk moving in and out of them,
staying the night, staying a hundred years.

But they’re imaginary. Imagine them,
a man in moonlight, a suntanned woman,
a house full of chairs, a table in every room,
a bed in few, if you manage to get inside

you roam through the rooms, room
after room, all empty of people like you

but not empty of themselves. A haunted house
is haunted by itself. It will never leave you alone,
and you are the shadow you trail behind you

in the morning. That faces you every night.

27 February 2009
the way she sings
is another thing

they way she lies
in bed late morning

the way she says
she is waiting

for the day itself
to be later and

and someone come
the way she lies there

still is another thing.

27 February 2009
now she is skimming over the water
on a music I don’t understand and why should I
I’m not going anywhere and she is a pirate
her name ends in a vowel she must be a woman
her flag has my face on it the worse for wear
my bare arms crossed beneath my chin
and I’m frowning at her why shouldn’t I be
I’m not going anywhere and she is the world
on its way to another world and that world
is full of mustaches and mountain goats and
you know the kind of stuff a world is full of
and why shouldn’t it be and she’s on her
way and every league of her wet way wave
after wave was poured out by me and why
shouldn’t I have given her everything I have
since she is everything I had and everything
I wanted and the music still doesn’t let up
and why should it after all it’s going with her
all the way there the place I think I’m from.

27 February 2009