As if they were waiting for us
the girls of the horizon, diaphane
their filmy dresses, tresses
weft of air and clouderies,
ever a bone
to get in the way of ours, sheer
penetrable Ideas—

my chemistry
is made of them. For them I think
but who really knows
what deeper purpose
what we call music serves,
all the words of it or
what I’m up to when I’m up
ranting my ravishment

or you, sailor, humming in the rigging
lost on some preposterous sea.

14 June 2009
Cuttyhunk
Is it ready yet?
Is it rain?
Is it a hook to fetch
bales of barley to the barn?

We have no barn
for this kind of grain

it’s hand to mouth
in this secret navy,
turn your back and
the whole sea is gone.

Eat what you can
hold in your cupped hands.

14 June 2009
So quiet. Is this a beforemath to some tragedy or just to this new day?

Is there a difference between a day and a difficulty—mountain gloom and mountain glory she called her book the title says it all, the rest is dates and numbers.

Why bother with less than poetry? Is it there anything less at all?

Every word begs the question, at least one. Dozens of doubts console the lazy mind.

14 June 2009
Half-dread with desire—
angel on the stairs
chemistry set in the cellar
I never had an attic

the angel sits on the midmost step
seems to be waiting for me to climb
I rise into the problem
lurching between
wall and banister
half-drunk with ascension—

the angel’s lap is full of light
I, like everybody else,
am blinded by what I see
but the steps beneath me
teach me what to do.

(There is an evil drug called being who you are.)

14 June 2009
Cuttyhunk
It was because her eyes.
Became his colors
he wore the thought of her

gold around his ocean neck
he rode
at the stern of her wagon
he followed wherever her
white mares carted her
as she seemed to be sleeping
all the while she traveled.

Sometimes she was bronze
or limestone, sometimes
her sweet flesh ached also for his.

Sometimes he touched her.
Her skin was his banner,
the rumble of her wagon’s
wheels was his religion.

14 June 2009
Remembering things
the way a dog
brings them back
a stick from the sea
drenched with surf
of all it went through
to retrieve
this broken fact

the dismal mind
trapped on its shore.

15 June 2009, Cuttyhunk
Forget you own an appliance to do it
just do it. Forget you have a battle to win
just win. Forget to go to church to pray to God.
Just God.

15 June 2009, Cuttyhunk
These things are not on my mind
they’re my mind.
A canker blooming on the rose
is still the rose.

Think about it:
there is nothing to think.
The sea thought it all for me
long ago and told the sky.

But I keep forgetting.
They silver mirrors by Mercury
who helps me remember
the binary pleasures of my little life.

15 June 2009, Cittyhunk
ALCHEMY

Rarely I look back to find
what I’ve been thinking.
Or what language has been thinking in me.

Writing is a kind of dreaming
at some distance from decision.
A black carriage rolling through the night
with no horses. But the horses are white.
The carriage stops. A pale slender hand
reaches out to touch me and the Work is done.

15 June 2009, Cuttyhunk
Anaximander waited here
I see his footsteps in wet sand—
broad, splay-toed, as if he liked
the feel of where he stood.

As if a philosopher had skin
or a poet had a brain.
Lucid intervals of seashore
children trooping home from first communion

murmuring Portuguese in white clothes.
I change myself into the color of mercury
a moment —you say Call that a color?
I call it a mirror. I can’t ever fool you,

the sky is still up there despite
all my efforts to pull it down, Queen of Heaven,
though sometimes you (or is it really
me) do let it rain

15 June 2009, Cuttyhunk
THINKS

How far do we go
before we’re gone?

A little life
a lovelorn thorn.

A little hurt
a little have.

Animals run
women walk
from under shaggy trees
men watch in terror.

Lovers coaxing the spine to transmit
pleasingly inaccurate info home.

15 June 2009, Cuttyhunk
Close enough to the rock
      to see the water—
      there is nothing between
      them but me.

A little map
      at arm’s length hides the sun.
Look at anything long enough
      and you’ll see the real thing
      showing through it
      sometimes even shining.

So much is up to you
      in this story.
Twisted limbs of damaged athletes
      all round the temple frieze
      as if it were such hard
      work to be simply here.

15 June 2009, Cuttyhunk
I can’t let it stop saying
till it means to.
Park on the sidewalk
near République
walk the rest of the way,
it is the night time of a city
people will let you do anything.
Look at the impressive monument,
even count the street lights.
The emotion you feel in your chest
is terror, it occupies the lodge
from which desire fled
frightened of how easy everything is.
You are trembling a little.
People notice but they’re trembling too—
you’ll never know if for the same reasons.
Stop all this. You are just a digit
in a long equation. How could you
possibly know what anything means?
The equals-sign is far away,
springs over a dark river.

15 June 2009, Cuttyhunk.
Some images never go away
the girl on the rock soft tawny hairs on her thigh
and the blackbirds anxious as ever
the seed.

Five thousand years
this has been going on,

how can I help it go on.

Live for this. The actual rootless
encounter, going nowhere, having
no socio-economic consequences.
Be gods in a lost religion.

15 June 2009, Cuttyhunk