

1-2008

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Nine howler monkey day  
the hap is a beastie's cry  
a howl like broken sugarbeets  
smashed on the highway'  
in a beet farmers' strike—

the road red through it,  
a slippery muck a going is  
as if we shuffled through  
the ruins of our own body's meat  
the insides of a poor  
broken man crying out in Irish

can you still do?

I can, a whimsful.

But a true?

Fine as can you,  
a mouthful or a minute.  
gar, I hate beets.

So be it. Collective  
farms work better anyhow,  
tractors and the like,  
Pudovkin even turned against him too,  
and Nikolai Cherkassov  
whose voice sounded just like God.

These things the monkeys say  
because only they  
remember and embody history.  
All the rest of us forget  
but a monkey lives alone with what happens.

And we have none living in our state.

28 January 2008 / *9 ba'ts'*

= = = = =

Watching the light grow, and even the sun about to rise over the hill, then actually rising. How good it is to be on earth again.

28 1 08

## LISTS

Lists are certainties.  
Lists are epistemologies.  
I never met a list I didn't like.

Didn't always want what was on them.  
Like mayonnaise  
or certain medical procedures.

Or some people I had to write letters to.  
But a list is fine,  
a thing mentioned on a list

is almost a thing already,  
almost here, almost done.  
The sun is almost up now, seen

between a maple sapling and an elm—  
what more could a poem give you  
than what a list does?

It asserts nothing, it just gives,  
sun elm maple hill and January snow.  
All telling and no argument.

All meat and no forgetting to come home.

28 January 2008

**There is too much going on.**

Makes me think I'm a verb  
or a bird not a man.

Ah me, we said in the old  
country, a man, what is he?

He is a bridge between forgetting  
what has been and not knowing  
what is to come,

this bridge sways beneath our feet.

The river gorge is deep  
don't look over the edge, don't stare  
down into the unfathomable now.

29 January 2008

## LEARNING IRISH: ECLIPSIS

When the attack  
changes. I approach you  
not wearing my own face  
but someone else's.

If I am B, I creep up on you  
as M. Softly. But you  
know me anyhow.  
Your tongue is in my mouth

is how I speak at all.

29 January 2008

= = = = =

My task  
is a box

a tax too  
in a bosky

year or place  
right here

as if an angel  
stumbled

and became  
all that's around

us and that too  
is to do.

Even for mountains  
we have to breathe.

30 January 2008

= = = = =

Not always worrying what is to become of him  
he became of himself, and stayed.

Long enough to light a cigarette and stub it out  
preferring after all not the natural

but the thing on the other side of a man  
when nature is firmly at his back

and suddenly he sees. Negation  
is the silkiest sheen of it, the easiest

part of anything is to say no.  
And then go. Forward,

into what is not yet there  
until you are. And still

stub his toe against a flower. A red one.  
And that's only the first mile.

30 January 2008

= = = = =

Excelsior easy to say  
around Beethoven or  
under the El on Livonia  
near Fortunoff's crates  
unpacked spill china  
and raffia all around  
RONDO memory as  
machine embedded in  
the warzone of soft tissue  
the brain the brain  
(autism is a disease  
of memory) (caution  
is a disease of desire)  
distemper, a gall on oak:  
write down now this  
thwarted passion  
in an ink stilled from  
your sick compulsions  
sweet amber, eaglewood,  
andante, andante.

30 January 2008  
Olin

= = = = =

Some days you don't  
want to think about  
some friends. Or see his  
picture on the table.

You turn it over. A date  
on the back is no help,  
some place name in a world  
you wish you weren't in.

Where are you now  
in your wanting to be?  
A friend, even a good  
friend, is of this earth.

Unforgivable proximity!  
Neighborhood of silence,  
suburb of Death. His face  
breaks your heart.

21 January 2008

## PSALM

The sun is my tree  
I shall not fall  
she dangles fruit  
where I can reach

she makes the sky  
not just a color  
but a house herself  
I meet her there

we are high together  
many arms a million  
fingers hold us to each  
other and let go

it is a grand music  
of yes and no  
when I stretch out  
she becomes my body

differenceless. Aloft.

31 January 2008

= = = = =

I have been slow at my work,  
brother elves, I have let them play  
with their old toys, drink  
yesterday's milk and I have left  
women to wear last year's shoes.

This is a sorrygram from santaland,  
it is a weary January it's been,  
all my effort spent on polishing  
the old trash in my box of tricks,  
old tunes set to nouveau chatter

and still I do it all for you (not you,  
elves, you others, over there,  
the listeners, listen) and still I care  
and dare and all that stuff  
and write it all down with you in mind.

31 January 2008