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Let there be a man on a sea, a sea with no ship.
Let there be a smallish opera like a sunbeam on a dumpster
through which another man is picking, a man
not yet destitute, Call this Johann Sebastian Bach and the first
man we'll call the Pleistocene climate
on which all European later American culture depended.
Two men. But music is always anyway saying whatever whatever.

10 May 2007
Bard Hall (Ming's noon recital)

= = = = =

It is what is seen
an island hidden in a lake
lake hidden in rock
rock in sky

and all the rest is you and me,
lords of the visible,
last of the visible. None
will follow us

up the path that leads
ever annoyingly to right here.
The same here that is
hidden inside every there.

10 May 2007
Bard Hall

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Between me and what I see
a stream is flowing.

What name do you give that,
mariner?

 And to what ocean
do you maps condemn it,

always flowing sideways to my intent?

11 May 2007

= = = = =

As certain deciders
deride complacent
sinners, saying
Plan to live forever

but prepare to die tonight
so the confident
lover with a blue bassoon
(you know him from old

paintings, poetry, teenage
dreams) seems
to blow louder and louder,
his lips shape the future

pours into your poor now,
no chance to escape
out into the brilliant
vast American maybe.

10 May 2007
Kingston

MORS

Ecstasy is it
or just stop?

10 V 07

SOTERIOLOGY

Put in the hours and
the day takes care of itself.
But there is another idiom
a logjam on a little Maine river
tending and being tended to

the girl wakes me at half-past light
sets a cup of darkness down beside the bed

—is this enough, really, just
because it happens? Where else
could the light go?
We are magnets for it,
if it weren't for us no sunlight ever on this planet.

we know all this, we read the lost gospel
over and over till we wore it out
and threw the soft tatters in the stream,
we counted, we counted the signs, we reckoned
on this and that, we “determin’d,
dar’d” and we were saved.

Number
is the savior of the world.

ὁ του κοσμου σοτηρ

O emptiness our empery
where everything can be, must be, said.
Change is all there actually is.

So who is the shadow of, then, if not she
who sidles across the ever-increasing light?

What flowers are lost into this potion
and who drinks?

Did you just dream me here
to swallow your dangerous juice?

A flock of stars came

down last night to graze at my window.
Could there be a respite here,
a little beginning, like a duck
invisibly paddling beneath her pale serenity,

real work is seldom visible,
kilocalories of separation to, for the man
must give the maid a miss, part from her pouting
when she is at her fetchingest,

the jungle
howls for me still, still I can't decide
what kind of animal I am.

I won't even bother to put her accent on.
The beginning began nothing. It is a troupe
of drunken soldiers staggering across the snow
long after the peace treaty has been signed
in a far away city they will never see,
just on and on, the way it is
drunk or sober, on and on
until there is no more.
All I ever need is something else.

11 May 2007

TAXONOMY

Lightning weed around my barn
I call it but it's my garage
my car my cow,
 spiky things with yellow heads
flowers I guess but can we call them that
when they arrive unwelcome

or at least unasked? The Indian
answer has to work: whatever
comes and grows belongs right here.
Don't interfere. It's your garage
that's more the issue, isn't it?
Though you too are just a thing that came and stayed.

12 May 2007

= = = = =

And none of these will speak again
birch tree riven with keen axe, spend
a day and try to hear the wood's word

old word, naught heard, it all keeps
still. Will there one day be a thing
that speaks, on the far side of now?

Nothing much yet. A leaf at most.

12 May 2007

AFTER THE WAR

Astyanax is dead again,
a girl in black tights
climbs into an old van.
Now who will keep the city safe?

12 May 2007

= = = = =

How high is a stack of no pancakes?
This is a question that much vexed me
an hour or so back in dreamland
when the vexatious angels of the lower air
were teasing me with their pleasant bodies
—innocent of weight and solidness—
and such questions. I was invited
to ask one too, I did but now forget.
It must have been not worth remembering or
maybe right now I'm the only answer there is.

13 May 2007

= = = = =

Anymore than an owl—
we see them fairly often when we look—
usually bothers with where people are,
preferring the endless encyclopedia of woods
where forage is, and eloquent information.
He flies close and sees what death means,
what Time is up to at midnight in the pines,
so the crystal forgets the hand that touches it.

13 May 2007

NOIR

It was one of those hard-luck seasons
when I couldn't even get into an anthology
of Overweight Irish Ex-Catholic Upstate Non-Rhyming Poets,

but still the sun was shining smart in the new trees
casting interesting shadows on the white house wall
like the shadows of leaves (though in black and white)

signifiers of richness and elegance that used to
open every David O. Selznick movie, a shingle
with words on it swinging in spring breezes.

You have to be old to remember the world.
When Jennifer Jones was the cutest kid in town.
Then she got old and I got young and things

went from bad to worse and then to good again
and nobody knows. Or maybe the shadow knows.

13 May 2007

INCARNATA

Did every barn
born. And rail
rode.

A round
of riddles
answer back.
You can't
can you?

Or refuse
sun's clarity,
squint away
lucidity?

Mere momentry,
not history.
Alack, her blue
eyes the angel how
do we know

and the color of?
It wants
and wants to be
history.

Aleph
among Greeks,
omega in Philistia—
born to raise doubts.
Grammar
is made to be wrong,

glad tidings
times nine
teach you
in the desert who

and you rose
balm-hearted
on the merciless air

into the kind void
you called the father.

So many letters
he let fall down
to write our history
to come

 among us,
a tent flap shaking in the wind,
a table wobbly on a broken leg

my Jacob.

 “We have come so far”
the sea divorces the shore.
In the muck between them
a little girl swiftly
ages and ages and sings.

13 May 2007

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Travel dreams tell me travel is just dream
the view out of her house the green of Richmond
one way and a big map of Deutschland on the wall,
why did I have to fly to Munich to fly to Hamburg,
did I want to walk across the heaths to Lübeck,
hear Buxtehude play? Why did I sit at the feet
of the little girl's bed (we shared the same father
but were not related) (he was sleeping soundly
in another room, fear to disturb him), she
was the only one awake already, to share
my anxieties and to tell me about her day to come.
She too had destinations. Anxieties, those
airlines of the heart that carry us
whither we would not go. Just like the bible,
something worse is always on the way.
Like the loo where the two oblivious businessboys
had to be asked to take their conversation
elsewhere so the toilet could endure its proper use.
Like places I had to fly to. Or lawn ornaments.
Or the deer vanished from Richmond Hill.
Not the little girl in curlers, but the TV set you can't
control the volume of, but only brightness,
darker and darker I made it but still my father woke,
he listened to my nervous apology for being
still here, I have to stay a day longer now,
I'll never get to Heathrow for the afternoon plane.

14 May 2007

= = = = =

Send everything the cheapest way.
When it gets here finally
you will have forgotten you ever asked for it
and it will lie there before you
like last night's dream suddenly
recalled vividly mid-afternoon
and what are you going to do about it now?
What if anything is the true use of this thing?
Pick it up. Maybe your hands will remember.

14 May 2007

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Everybody's read to trade
himself in for a new model
but I'll wait for a radical
change in the design, some
fall to come. The engine
will run exclusively on
what? Air? Light?
Is there anything I absolutely trust?

14 May 2007

NOS HABEBIT HUMUS

May the humus
that will have us
hold us not too long.
There is a song
the demons teach:
Each for each
and none for all
that has a better
meaning than you think.
Arise arise is what it says,
you've had enough of being dead.

14 May 2007
Kingston

= = = = =

User's guide to what has no uses,
only Muses. Leave the sound of it
hanging on your wall. Swallow
the colors of its pattern – these
dissolve inside in accesses of pure
meaning, which has the shortest
life of all, soon forgotten but
the real wall stands there. Sell it.
Move to the jungle. Let
the monkeys do it. Hormones and
instincts – you fought them a while
with all your sonnets and chaconnes,
now let the jaguars pass undescribed
glare-mottled by the clearing's rim.

15 May 2007

SAINT PROUST

Rachel when from the Word
means Ewe he found her
safe in the pyre of the ordinary
(pyre has fire in it no need
to say fire) (as you have sheep)
it became his life his game
to rescue her from organized
religion that origami of the soul—

why do I tell you this? Because
Proust says whenever she
came in the room or conversation
someone would hum or sing
“Rachel When From the Lord”
out of Fromental Halevi’s *Jewess*
seeming to refer to this finally
abominable incivility of cliché
as if complicit with its practice—thus
showing himself a master of
that irony that bespeaks the Real
pretending to be portion of it
since never does he judge, ever
lets epiphany speak for itself.
All morning I’ve been hearing
his voice repeating them repeating
in their various voices and hummings
Rachel quand du Seigneur and hoping
for the clarity to forgive my society
as he did, when from the Lord
his love was lent to the meagerest.

15 May 2007

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I think it's time I started to tell the truth

How I got

...

and that's as far as I got, come in today
and find that in My Documents (recovered)
I think I remember writing that down once
and easily can imagine why I went no further
but it did want me to tell the truth
about something, about maybe, about who
the hell I think I am to know what is truth
and what isn't, and how I could tell
one from the other and then tell it
when found, if found, me of all people.
And tell it to you, you with your soul
hanging out of your body like clusters
of wisteria last night on the old wall at Blithewood
where it wanted us to be walking, where it
had something in mind it still might be willing to tell.

15 May 2007