Acheful weather
thought I heard
then a black
capped chickadee
clung lightly
to the windowscreen,
a message first
from his kind,
blessing bird
seemed to cling
to empty air,
sunlight pouring
through the room
seduces us all.
We try to know
the light, touch it,
cling to it.
Birds a-many
wanting in,
wanting me
for all I know,
for all they know
I might be light,
a splendor
trapped in mere skin
like you. Like you.

4 November 2007
Everybody’s tired of your love songs she said but never tired of love. The song’s a mere instead-of, be quiet and come to terms with the silences of being with she said. 1 did.

4 November 2007
Have little speaking for a fall of night.
A kind of woman’s face with eyes.
As if. Something in a wood
or woods. Belief
or sensuous. A white man brushing his teeth.

4 November 2007
What we saw from the path
wolf eyes but no wolves.
Writhing tree roots surfacing
in everlasting thirst
the way they do. Twist underfoot.
Moon almost gone. Flesh
is a sort of calendar, I tell
time by your skin.

4 November 2007
We must follow where language takes us.

But maybe it’s words, not language. Words are angels trapped in the social web of language.

Words are cries in the dungeon of language.

Reading *Tender Buttons*, follow where the sentences take us—is a sentence language?

Or is a sentence a momentary archangel leading a jailbreak, the words rush out, mailman, toaster, the child laughs, milk laughs, the bowl breaks, the floor goes to California and we breathe again?

5 November 2007
If water’s blue
there is a reason
they call it music
where I come from

once in Laramie
or just outside
I saw a pronghorn
leap a wire fence

I knew we had come
to the right place
in brittle air
sun rhymed with earth

dirt but magpies
disagreed
I was silent too
from reproof

birds tell you
when you’re right
or wrong they
fly away.

5 November 2007
LOVE

The needless precision of the heart
transferred to embarrassment outside.
A poetics of embarrassment, lovesongs,
hangdog sonnets crimson with blush.

No more lovesongs. But dear sir
the song invented love, don't you remember? There was no love
before the troubadors sang it up,

a new trick, a new pattern
for energy to flow quick
between people, tender trouble,
a cliché worth dying for.

5 November 2007
Something like an ampersand a sign
that leads some other signs
in dubious matrimony, their love
lasts as long as meaning does
and then a weatherstorm comes up
and copper nails hammer out the doors
and walls go to sleep. this was a house.
this was an afternoon together, a little boat,
a sulfur butterfly and then. something
like a sign but not a sign. something like
a dead child but not a child.
which of us can remember a number
larger than a hand? it was ice here,
rain drowning in a sea of sand.
coral when it’s dead is very red.
Tried to give you paper flowers
you were mad, wanted advice not admiration.
You wanted an admiral I gave you an ocean.

5 November 2007
A BADGER

dead beside the road
in Omagh.
A badger, grey, well-formed,
comely even in his new state
recently dead, outstretched
along the road, snout
pointing south to the Republic
out of this lethal town.
Long pain
of borderlands,
beasts are fit inhabitants of such,
their whole life in on patrol,
the sleek grey catastrophe,
it got me thinking
of all the dying
and for what? Only
living does any good,
if that, if then.
No more martyrs.
No more dead badgers
beautiful or not.
No more borders.
God, no more roads.

5 November 2007
NEAR DAWN AT THE NAVAL HOSPITAL

There were some near me catching
there was a boat
proposed as a definition
Go Somewhere as a solution

Nobody’s mother, all of them enough
for anything.

The nurses
at Volpe’s
were too hard for me,
nylons below the white skirts
stretched medical taut.

a body packaged
in sheer will
against all feeling,
they drank only to know
their will uncoiling, the drive
to be somebody unbelonging,
independent, there never
is.

Nobody
listens to the jukebox,
time in only about passing,
nothing happens,
in summertime the dawn comes early,
the girls get older, the men get drunk.
the ferry will start running soon,
now the island is alone with its green bridges,
Republicans asleep all down the shore,
and foxes hungering up Todt Hill.

6 November 2007
It could be an aria
it could be air
    a chin uplifted
a thing happening to the breath of a man
a tone inside a word
    set free
the word goes
    to sleep on the air
and the tone lasts
wordless to be true.

Things sleep in other things.
Words say music, music
    says
    Listen to yourself
such things your saying
down inside you
where the music I am
is coming even now,

forget the words, forget
the music, this
    is all about you.

6 November 2007
Why can't I do today
the thing I must do tomorrow?
Long lines of Virgil uncoiling sunshine on autumn’s fresh leaf-fall,
bitter with beginning again
and again, always a war, always a man
nursing his bruise and trying to remember.

6 November 2007
Hi, I’m giving a reading, I should have turned this thing off. I’ll call you back.

A poetry reading, I’m standing in front of a hundred people, I’ll call you back.

No, really, I’ll call you back, we can’t talk now.

My own poetry, of course.

From the last couple of books, you know, I sent you copies. I think I did, anyhow, you can check later, we’ll talk later, we can’t talk now.

I really think I really did send them to you, no, not to your office, to your house. Maybe your husband hid them.

I’m sorry, I didn’t mean anything, I’m just nervous, I’ve got to get off the phone now, I’m standing at the podium, in public, the audience is waiting, from Christ’s sake, they’re listening to every word I say.

No, I don’t have you on speakerphone, they can’t hear you. But I can’t even turn my microphone off, the guy in the control booth up there went out for a smoke, please, I’ve got to get off the line now, I’ll call you later, I promise.

No, I’m not making it up. Please, audience, no, not you, you, please, applaud, so she’ll know I’m really here. Please. I’m really here.
I owe it to the other
to speak last.
First. I don’t know
what the other wants.

Listen, but who to
as we say, who
are we to say
anything when

the other is still waiting?

7 November 2007
ON THE DAY SIX TSI'

Six dogs no
they're wolves
know I'm here
their eyes
remark me
I happen
to the environment
short-breathed
like a stone
ponded, a pond
stoned no
certainty
in an animal
they lead me
athwart
my own experience
to a null place
unregistered
asylum the actual
unexpected no
has to be here
the stars and so
on demand it
powerless to
answer the answer.

But I wonder if that could be the end of it.
Asthma is not much of a breakfast,
the huge encyclopedia of the breath
is full of questionable certainties still

with one mistake after another still
limp across the page and knock on the door
there is a freshness to the air this morning
light golden from the trees one guesses

the door goes on being wood
knock knock I am the answer to your prayer
I said no prayers the voice inside says
well say them now and let me in
darling I have my best conversations
with a door Well slip your god underneath
and then we’ll see but the light
changed the street started running

and the house like any house was gone
darling our natural condition is Persepolis.

8 November 2007
(listening to Pierre Benoit’s flute concerto, first movement)

The bird struggles
to escape from the sky
that biggest net
the blue forest

and fluttering like a flute
he is held fast
in the meshes of what is.
Isness.

How can
an animal be so alone
friendless and cold
and nothing but
beauty in the world?

9 November 2007
Sometimes things float.

There is a reason
between the ship and the shore
different from the sea,

there is a reason
deep in the Human lung
no single word will ever
be able to express.

Press out. Yield
into the ordinary day.
Which has its reason too.

9 November 2007
(Benoit, 2nd movement)
And other things go away.
It’s not remarkable,
it is a boy reading a story,
we’ll last as long as it does,
as the girl does writing it down.
We depend on her
to go on going on.
And all we have to do
is let him read or
all we do is listen.

9 November 2007