Caught as what could
on top of the need farm
I flutter my hand from the bone pole your way
whispering Mahler at the end of the menu

because I want you,

there, that is simple
softer even ever than you thought I’d say it,
dich, immer, where the Blue Mountains we own
lure us like the Canaanite harlots they are
into the relentlessness of distance
where we know, finally, painfully,

we belong. There is no way to be here any longer,
we are kings in mufti, nibbling falafel with the vulgar, yes,
do you fall in love with a whole language
just to kiss one mouth?

So the flags still count, still come
parading through the post-impressionists,
they can’t get the colors out of their heads yet either,
not just the fun of them, tu sais, not just the fierce strife and Albers din of them,

but that the beautiful
animals they are mean something,
that is hard, isn’t it,
the colors come on their own feet from their own forest and we can’t
do anything but let them keep telling us
what I’ve been trying to tell you all morning
but the music keeps making me go somewhere else.

6 May 2006
“I HAD TO PAY HEAVILY”

he said in his old man’s voice, the tortured jaw in perfect English, among the flowers and foliage of Hampstead,

his own voice, the only words of his I’ve ever heard,

the master, smiling, bent a little forward, rueful, admitting.

This is Freud, talking. Something happens in my chest when I hear him, the gentle old voice, speaking my language, so clearly, something happens in me, this is a saint I’m hearing, a holy voice that goes right through me,
saying that bourgeois thing, that Jewish thing, the cost of everything,
the weight of everything, the weight of money, the compulsion,

I had to pay

heavily,

pay for the flowers, for the garden they grow in, for the land below the garden, the dream below the ground, the dream below all transaction, that this
is mine, that I can give it to you,
to you for something
that is yours,

    the dark beauty of transaction,
of an old man standing in a garden,

I hear a few words, somebody’s home movies of him,
he’s speaking,

    and his words speak to me, in me,
this is it, the famous ‘talking cure’

    and suddenly I am healed.


6 May 2006
Name of the sir: Sir.

Name of the moon: sun. Mistake.

The machine breaks up
into bright bands of color
codeless messages –
what you be is what you see,

there are no camels
no packboats crowding the Seine.
Fishless you prosper, oceanfat,
illiberal, mine own.

7 May 2006
LOVE SONG

Of course I want to walk there with you
you are my ear-trumpet my warhorse
my catalogue of sins my Vatican
stuffed with absolutions. Of course
you are the only one for me, my heel and toe
soft shoe Orphic interlocutor
Port of Spain. Of course you reign.
I dither at your side alarmed
into music you grace to hear.

7 May 2006
HALLMARK

Never leave me never believe me
a catalogue is what I do best
like all chronic desirers, a list
of all the things I need you be.

7 May 2006
X marks the stop
A typo in the heart of space

her grandfather signed
his marriage contract so
as if a chromosome and not a man
but what a chromosome!

A bird let fly from the wrist
never comes down!
Sunset on the moon.
A man never comes back to the sign.

7 May 2006
Jesus said: Become passers-by.

_Gospel of Thomas, 42_
AT MIDNIGHT

This is a postcard.
It shows a pretty child
standing in a flowery meadow
smiling, holding in one hand
a plastic bucket, a little
scoop or shovel in the other.
The picture is called
Absence of the Ocean.
It is religious and very sad
despite or because of the smile.

7 May 2006
I find in my pocket a paper
says Open windows
bring the summer.
Something about attitude.
Something about control.

8 May 2006
Marksman’s music:
if I sing there
(looking at a point
in the sky only he can see)
that beast will fall.

Suppose we didn’t have to kill.
Suppose we could leave the sky alone.

8 May 2006
= = = = =

After the wonder we started the numbers.
What a difference 2 makes! An ideal
shattered, a young woman found
riddled with bullets on a bare road in Iraq.
Or the moon any night.
Long before you ever get to three.

9 May 2006
That we choose the wrong one.
That the opera accelerates.
That the man feels comfortable with formally similar propositions.
That anaphora is close to prayer.
That prayer is close to that to which and by means of which we pray.
That God talks to Herself using our mouths.
That things like this excite him in a way he can barely contain.

9 May 2006
Try to tell the truth once.
The kayaks tonight in the cove
the swimmer with the cellphone, see
I’m lying already.
There is no one there. No one
even remotely talking to anybody else.

9 May 2006
OMPHALOS

Earth navel. Something waits.  
Not just at Delphi –  
there is more than one Earth  
in the Earth. Spheres coincide.  
Sometimes we live between the shells –  
that is the hour of the suicides. 

A disease is waiting  
for the least of them,  
the them who are us also, in their red  
coats their dark blue coats  
their green parkas their Breughel togs.  

For I am a log lying in a marsh  
and a girl kneels by me, her elbows  
rest on my bark as she gazes into the trees.  
God knows what she sees. 

9 May 2006
THE ACTUAL MILEAGE MAY VARY

The swans may be sullen,
refuse to turn back into princes.
It may not rain. The petunias
wither on the windowsill. Up the valley
potential skiers are buying real estate.

*Vae, vae terrae!* Woe to the earth,
it is as if Europe died and no one knows.
We’re still in the “as if” stage of our downfall,
examining foreign travelers suspiciously,
you never know. It’s like the flu,
suddenly it’s there and your grandmother
lies in the churchyard. And still
no swan, no rain, no name.

10 May 2006
“The writing pen cleans itself,” I wrote.

Miracle, that it happens that I remember

something that someone I’ll call “I”

said or did some other time. Some world

where we would perish without approximations.

Oh somewhere is a planet with no pronouns

just hard edges and particulars to give life.

10 May 2006
THE ALIEN

We have no society
we use just what’s in your head

the bluegrey whatever in you

Society is something you made up
because you can’t hear yourself think

we can

11 May 2006
Getting closer. All days
begin with a gerund.
Everything raps. That’s
the trouble, there is nothing
that doesn’t rhyme,
no unrhymed space
left for the mind to not hear,
to not connect. Not doing
is a species of doing.
Take away the gerund, that noun
disguised as a verb.
Nothing doing.
Even nothing keeps going.

11 May 2006