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Freed from
    or is it peace of,

one fragment of our loss dissolved
in all-wine

the pharmakon.

The silence in my head keeps growing,
going,
    soon it will get there

wherever it is that silence is heading.

8 July 2006
THE MARKET OF SILENCE

I sense it from far off like the great domed mosque
with minarets arising slender from
the glacial lake plain outside Toledo
which your reporter spotted once
with no disposition to stop and pray.

No monument ever made me want to say my prayers,
in places like cathedrals all the prayers have been said already
and still are there, no need for me,

a million tons of stone poise graceful in the air.
What more is there, what other proof do I need?

Whenever you pray you turn slowly into your prayer,
you turn to stone.

This is dangerous for travelers,
glaciers and no rain, peace of Westphalia or
thousand years war, I still have to put
one thought after another, modest as moss
or Mozart, and get there waving my checkbook,
humans as we are, tokens of obsolete economics.

8 July 2006
Sudden need for music
makes a man stand out his hand
across the street she hears him
with the corner of her eye
and all the cars that roll between
chorus of simple villagers praising Baal
while the two of them seek the one true god
just where their fascinated eyebeams meet.

10 July 2006
TEE SHIRT

Yours, printed with a comic poem, can’t read,
the way the words hide among your breasts,
it’s like those paper placemats diners used to have
What Is Wrong With This Picture?
How Many Can You Find, well I find plenty,
I find your shirt, I find your hand
too far away from mine. I find our knees
don’t meet under the table
in the great abyss down there where
lost spoons make love. I find I have been writing
your initials elaborately on my napkin
but you are not writing mine. There are so
many things wrong are there any things right?
Maybe your eyes. But they make me start
counting all the things that are wrong again.

10 July 2006
Not for long to be wrong again
fan at midnight shakes
gently the deep orange roses’ petals
their deep green leaves and I am done.

10 VII 06
ZAKHOR

Ghost of Neanderthal
waiting in the shadows of the library.
Mount Carmel.

The first cave
was the world itself. Everybody
lived here first, and they
are here as specters still.

Sonata structure. Here, gone, here,
we are the end.

Time itself
is a construction. Remembering
is just a walk in the dark.

10 July 2006
ELEGY FOR TRUTH

Where those lost ones lie
and where they bathe
naked in moonlight
unforgotten

as if something happened
to the rose
and we had to forget
all it meant to us before

and now it is some common Turkish flower
found its way here and stayed
and no one thinks of it in April
and by August it’s already away
and the thorns dig in

a pain, a pain of its own
like remembering the Bible
some special mysterious cruelty in it,
what happened to the boys who loved Dinah

some metaphor that poisons your whole life

unless like the brazen serpent
held up in the wilderness
the venomous image itself
gazed on profoundly redeems,
releases us, heals.

Aletheia, teach me to forget,
for truth has to be forgotten
into the body
to be really true,

as when we say a thing is so
so and not otherwise
the way a bone is

or a madman you spot walking in the street
truth,
not something you know
but how you know it,
know anything at all,

I look at your face, your face
remembers a mountain.

II July 2006
And in this apathy
a gleam that needs me

I get angry when
you go out playing with children
when the Orpheus in you
screams for his lyre

only the bones of your hand
can stroke it, calm
as fingers on a smooth book
idly caressing,

only the lyre-horn laid
against your breast can
tune that sound and make
his, yours, the most
thoughtful of all music.

The busiest city is
a ruined abbey, shadow-birded,
waiting for your
insistent call-note.

Have you ever heard the white-throated sparrow sing at nightfall?

Just fill the words in and let me hear.

11 July 2006
THE FAILURES

of what will not fall
close-fitting rapture
tongue on your throat skin
licking up

The truth is coming,

Verity is naked again,
all the punitive judges excited
by the tumult of their observations,

ah the senses, those perjured witnesses.

11 July 2006
REFUGEE FROM THE BIBLE

I am who. Everybody’s relative.

1.
In my day I watched the strange Egyptian prince that poet enraptured with the sense of exile, aflame with resentment, in love with outcasts, swarming out of Egypt with a host of lepers tinkers gypsies convicts chemists true believers, the empty places

give me the empty places Lord and I will make them speak

how could he trust that rabble but he did, flattered maybe that they trusted him.

2.
He took one god and left all the rest behind, maybe he took the one nobody wanted back there, the only god with no face, no animal stand-in, hardly even a name, and you knew he was there only when something was on fire. His fire caught in you, and you knew.

3.
Was it ever in me?

Was I ever one of them? I was born in their encampments born into their precious exile their darling wilderness

But I was to them as Prince Moses was to Egypt, an outcast born, an embarrassment, I wanted gods with faces,
faces with lips, gods with hips and breasts,  
with mountains, gods who cast shadows,  
gods I could feel  
in my body, their hands reaching  
down through my arms to become my hands  

my hands and all that they could learn to do.

11 July 2006
In a house lost in the woods a man, an old man, play a golden harp to a deaf woman, a little younger. It is the saddest story I ever heard. It is heaven. All depending.

11 July 2006
THE LADDER

Tell Jacob I’ll take
the later ladder
the one I look down
to see ascending
and follow no one
up the rungs to
ipse up there, the thing
itself not far from here.

11 July 2006
OUT TO DINNER

I remind a schoolboy that I remain
a schoolboy waiting for his dinner.
That is, we are both sinners,
body always focused on the easy

beyond the abstruse appetite for words.
Stop talking, make your mother
give me something to eat. Silence.
Self in other. The best thing

about kissing is no talking.
The privilege of silence, immense.
A schoolboy stuffs his face
while reading a story

about another boy in another place
walking through crazy trees
heavy with succulent fruit
o god the smell of them and wanting.

12 July 2006
AUBADE

No one is entitled to identity.
Fire engines pass at dawn
weird to think of fire
that it can be at work so early.

Bless this food so that
in eating it I take on properties
of use to you, construing
you as plural-universal

like a cup of tea left unfinished
cool, anti-oxidants enough for all.
May I always be a glass of water.
May I always be a chair and table.

May I turn into what you seek.

12 July 2006
Some one small
sees me from the trees.
I was dozing. The woods
around my house—
nothing to be seen
but all of them seeing.
I wake into observation,
a part of landscape at last.

12 July 2006
Trap smoke in a bottle.
This was Nero’s Rome,
this is Alexandria
when the books were burned.
Smoke in a glass,
the slow precipitate,
gas is invisible
something happens to the air.
Old Rhineland poets
discovered the middle class—
for them pretty girls were invented
and adventure, texts of interest
only to the stay-at-homes,
the knights of salient economics
wrapped in their golden loricas
read about real trees.
Deep in the forest also
sleepy dragons read romances.
Open the book and the smoke sails out.

12 July 2006