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Early. Two sounds.
The deep sea heave
And a higher, brushed
Cymbally sound
As if I were hearing this
Sun sparkle on the bay.

Then I know the two
Are one, the lift
Of the wall and fall
On the rocks along the shore.
Then the wind
Near me. And a blackbird
In the elm tree.

Nothing else but me.

5 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

Material trace

Everything he heard he kept hearing

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As if there were nowhere to go
and I went there

you were there with a cup
full of pomegranate juice,
the kind you like to slurp
noisily through old Faßbinder films

all my own blood went away
long ago
like a blackbird on the rock

my eyes are dim
the books are Greek
I used to speak
a thousand years ago

when you too were young
a meshwork of bronze cabling
snug low around your hips.

5 June 2005, Cuttyhunk (Palm)

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Afternoon. The breeze
is coming in now
from Naxos, from Mytilene
across the water.

I am only an island
I live for what happens to me
for what you do
with all your comings and goings

the heavy-duty remembering
that breaks anybody's heart
and no repair. Wine,
not wine. The church,

black smoke, opium,
not opium. Nowhere but you.
The only one I ever knew
who was not an island.

5 June 2005, Cuttyhunk (Palm)

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Fear and then desire.

A meal among friends
or a mill abandoned
by the dead river.

Desire for what?
What did the mill grind?
Or weave or press?

Who are my friends?

6 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

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Opalescent
cloud with one
sun in it:
coat
of arms of the day.

6.6.05 Cuttyhunk

C'EST LA VIE

Sneeze. Fleabite. Mosquitoes
out at last last night
after the first mild day.

One of them came in with us
and sang now and then
beside my ear, a small
song she only knew.

Ticks and fleas
on dogs and cats.
One for you and one for me.

And then all night
trying to share my dreams with myself,
an aching ankle in the bed with me
like one of Pessoa's *othernames*,
my body my final pseudonym.

6 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

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There has to be some place where it's true
the way an egg balances on equinox
or right on the equator water
doesn't whirlpool down the sink
just seeps down fast. Or sun hides in cloud.
Or you can discern your lover's disposition
by counting daisy petals. So much is true.
There really has to be some thing
for every word, and that's the trouble,
entities multiplied beyond necessity
through the mind spaces, word choked,
for that is where the language takes us,
dahin, that country where a fruit
you never tasted grows quick and juicy
beneath an extra sun. And they have
more moons down there than you have pearls
around your neck when you go to hear *Tosca*
and the whole night congests with music too
and harmless ships sail the soul away
to a skybound place con men call 'home.'

6 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

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Subtract the sea.

What's left is me.

Get rid of that

and you have something

real as they say

around here a mouth

desperate to speak

content to silence

itself in a kiss.

Or is it always

the other way round

nothing on its mind.

7 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

DAS BUCH DER VÖGEL

My hope is the outside.

Bunch of blackbirds
gull on the roof.

If there were any girls on the island
they'd read Neruda

and then where would I be.
A fog with the whole sea in it.

Have I have to have it again
like the sun, dependable as light,
choking with comparisons?

If I were in my shoes,
I'd sing a different Lied.

Falcons. Egrets. Woodcocks. Doves.

The four rivers of Paradise
are birds flying overhead,
are birds flying away, the escape
from the center, fugue,
the Mendeleev conspiracy

to flee the unity. The dread.

Falcon fire

Egret water

Woodcock earth

Mourning doves the air

they sing is plaintive, mind us,
gives us their name –

how low I have to fly to meet myself.

A sense of meaning soars through the earth.
Tesla heard it, the literal,
ground of the ground.

I reach down
to loosen mulch around last year's
new-done hydrangea – blue in its
day briefly – and I feel that surge
of something, quiet, steady,
rising to meet my fingers,
if I let it, flowing into me.

What does it feel like?

It feels like a word
some nearby voice pronounces

like a child who learned it
that afternoon in school
and is very sure of how to say it
and says it, and says it again,
not too sure of what it means

my fingers hear.

7 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

THE ELM TREE

Takes the sea fog
saves it along each leaf,
shakes in the sea wind
so it's always raining
under the elm tree
even when the day is dry
and sun shines everywhere
but there, you walk
in fresh remembering rain
beneath the leaves
quivering between you
and society, a grand
dream, a poet tree
making its own weather.

7 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

FROM THE DIARY OF PARACELSUS

Waxed over sea the sun
is a bee the light is wax
someone eats the honey

I need a pseudonym
to say what's on my mind

the sun is God's monocle
the poet said, slipping
on a wet plum stone
in market dawn

forty years before I was born
the sun was also shining
amazing things
knew how to be
before me and to do

one thing leads to another
that is the great rule the E at Delphi ε
the vav at Jericho to die n

and not let it matter to be born
in no one's way the light decides

you have heard pure agency stirring in the ground
have kissed such things as rose
and bent to them that didn't flower

in those days holding a leaf
meant business silo full of wheat

nobody asking questions where did you
get that rain who hung the stag horn
sumac with such raw meat
why is the moon?

8 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

LOVE LETTERS ARE OUT OF THE QUESTION

Who would read them even if they wrote
themselves, automatically, every time
the sun comes up our heads
fill up with love's valuable garbage,
garbled messages that nobody sent
but everybody means, and you
get elected to be the shivering
sweetheart of some blue galaxy
in which we barely manage to survive
pain after pain and a gentle wind.

8 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

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a gentile mind
I thought he'd written
him with his rings on his hoof
and the ink in his heart

blaming himself yet again
for Brith-lessness
and the only covenant he makes
was with his mind.

8 VI 05, Cuttyhunk

RABBITAT

this hyper-bunnied island
last night the leapers
all the little ones
wherever we walked

they turn their backs
to be invisible
then they doubt
and hop away

what does that
remind me of
always a hedge
to hide in

some convenient
natural fact
to distract
my enemies.

Rabbit hour
light fading
waves coming
also in fast.

what the rabbits are up to
eludes conviction -- there is
hardly anything less plausible
than a rabbit

8 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

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Keep waiting for the other side of something else.

Fulmar or jaeger. Not a hint of
surf today, just waves rippling quietly
in.

--Who care about your endless ocean?

Does it put food on a poor man's table,
red tide swamping the whole coast?

--There are no poor men anymore, only
women. The men are in the various
armies, dying – poverty is the government's
basic inducement

--you don't know

what you're talking about, who are you,
everything is just the same. Molecules
change position, there is no net gain.

"The poor you have always with you"
said the Lord.

--Meaning what, precisely?

Social irresponsibility, mystic escapism?

--Meaning what he said. Do

what you can do with what you have.

--And if you have nothing?

--The world

is full of consolations, rich with seas,
stones, mandarins, other
people's diamond rings
glimmer in your morning sun
just keep an eye on change.
--I thought you said nothing changes
--No, I said everything changes
but change doesn't mean a thing.

8 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

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not after under the bright
day the shore all rocks
the sand gone in winter storm
and the bay huge and one
big eider floating close
I tell this from the end of life
when the target card is shot
full of holes and you can't tell
no more the misses from the hits
.22 rifle but twenty two what?

8 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

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Who am i?

it asks suddenly inside

it shocks me to stand up

like a blackbird hurtling off the fence

the danger close.

Is I the I that means you,

myself talking to me

or another altogether different

identity, ipseity,

some other I

telling me to answer?

An answer has to be a kind of remembering.

Every man his own sphinx

I think. But it matters

am I asking myself or is
someone else asking me

why does it matter
a self is a self

'who am I?' asks about any
but what is the answer?

Nescio.

Let me hide in the question.

8 June 2005

Cuttyhunk