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WAITING

Waiting for it
is being there before
it but are we?

Does the wit and,
in white
have a house

of her own
now? Or
rove

veering to left
ever like a new
thought

in nobody’s mind?

9 September 2005
(Craftwork)

To break how the line thinks
for itself to strew the mind
in local habit, the saloons
it hits on the way home or poetry,
the savior knee-deep in what it saves.

9 September 2005
Tell me all you know about goodbye

the doctor said. I am a sailor, here’s my card, Merchant Mariner, full of farewells, deep voice, tattoos on my eyelids that spell your name—a clever trick I learned in Singapore, blue dots that every woman reads as her own name. Never mind my own eyes, hazel and hazardous ha ha my mother used to say. Yes, I had one. To be honest (that’s a laugh), honest as I can my whole life I’ve been trying to say goodbye to everything. But women are the only ones who listen.

9 September 2005
(class exercise, my first line)
THERE

To be further
and you.

A pause
in the middle
is the middle.

Exactly.
The way a photo
of a splitlevel ranch
1973 shows
one single fact
a wordless unity

‘house’ won’t work
or ‘time’ no closer
or even ‘here’
because it was then
right now
and there
in the middle of itself.
To find you
there, or there
in the picture
could be any time
azaleas bloomed
and who knows
any better
than to follow
them in their doings
so deep in time

or be a house
to which the traveler
hastens at nightfall
trapped in his desire
to be someplace
special, you
for instance, to take
refuge from the night
in you, for instance,
as if any place
were so different
from any other,
as if everyone
were not the same flower
and these flowers
were not common as the sky.

Who will cut me free
from the web of time
stuck to my desires
I weave and weave?
This isn’t a psalm or sutra
it is a house
a little lifted
from the level
of the old street, straight,
the ever traveler hurries
as before, maybe
in his anxiety
this time rushing
past the thing he means,
thinking: this house
it has no center
no room for me
inside its flowers.

How wrong he is, 
this house is his
own palace, core
of the universe,
angels mow the lawn
and devils sweep
the blacktop driveway
to the built-in garage,
everything he hastens
towards is terribly here
terribly waiting,
everything and nothing
the simple colors
of the chemicals
propose an ecstasy
bending inwards,
to live so long
in the look of a place
alone. To hurry in.

10 September 2005
BATTLEFIELD

Paschal victim
passing this dale
bled white
a long ago

this being nearby
this quick
to answer
demand of stream

never in my
years has this
run dry a kind
of earth dyslexia

putting the rain
in the wrong place
I would be proud
to misunderstand.

11 September 2005
WORLD IN WATER DROP

A diamond in Harry Winston’s window
pays compound interest on the ordinary light

a diamond is an animal of it
or autistic, silences
into radiance anything it takes in

and gives it back
most generous stone.
Splendens. Nitens.

All the Latin
for taking light
into your own hands.

It’s a bargain, Harry.
Like a bistro on the moon
we watch from here,
come money me.

11 September 2005
OLSON

his direct
cut through rhetoric

a scar on silence

Nothing ever easy after.

11 IX 05
THE DISTANCE

Return to dream
be near the thing
it came from bone
no measure no
gold chain ankle
becoming anybody else
in the subway look
across the car the
dear friend the dear
friend is anybody else.

Commentary:
That was the horror story. You are with your friend in a public
place, train or street, some kind of busy easy going. And all at
once your friend, your dearest perhaps friend, without being in any
way changed, is not your friend. Not even anybody you know. A
stranger, but without the strange.

Now you know your friend is somebody else. And when your
friend is gone that way, your life is gone too. Maybe now you are
no more yourself than your friend is your friend. A self might be
as fickle as a friend, or subject to the same sort of mysterious wind, blow away, blow away. You look at the fine gold links of the chain round your friend’s ankle and know that this familiar, soft, meaty, foot beside you is as far away as anything on this earth could be. An irrevocable distance has happened. There are people standing in the aisle so you can’t see your own face reflected – thank God, you don’t have to see what face that might be, that once was, like the friend, your own. She is someone else now. You try to console yourself (your self? is that so sure?), thinking that maybe else is just as dear as she was, not so long ago.

12 September 2005
MORALISCH

Answer all your mail
or go to jail. Speak
politely to the eagles overhead,
pray they lead you
soft to a quieter destiny.
Ask, but don’t tell.
Chew, but don’t swallow.
Your body’s out of balance—
could a star up there be broken
in the sky? Ich bin geschwind
als wie des Menschen Gedanken!
he cries, and his high voice
tells you that he the Devil is,
the Yetzer-Fellow, the quick to want—
the hand of a child reaching out.

12 September 2005
Everything begins at the wrong time
which is the right time
on some other planet
where the moon is a pearl
hung moveless in the sky

but on this land of broken dikes
of fallen towers of lying mouths
there is no right time anymore
no καιρός.

The harvest
has come and gone.
And left us here alone.
We are stubble.

13 September 2005
I keep thinking of your word.
Won’t me myself think of you
your mouth speaking the word.
precise lips shaping the natural
universal air to say the one thing
you mean, the thing that may
or not mean me, don’t let me see.

Seeing waits
on the wrong
side of being

where tigers slither through the rain.
We come to any place at all
to meet Judgment there,
end of the world every living minute,
the voice of the tiger.
The judge’s eyes so busy seeing
they make no room for love—
I was waiting. I wanted
to be the tiger. Autumn sunlight
striped across the leaves,
shadow on tawny tree-fall,
my whole body pronouncing your word.

13 September 2005
CAUGHT

The air itself
captured
as by a crucifix
held suspended

two lines, two meager
simple weightless crossing lines
to hang a god on.

It is the shape that kills.
Geometry
crucifies the man.

!

We suffer from the angular. Heaven
will have a different kind, a trans-
Euclidean condition
at the end of Paradise,
a Persian word for that garden
where we began
and can come back to
since every word
breaks the seal on the door.

13 September 2005
This thing you’re about to do you’ve done before. And you’re still where you are. Don’t do it. This is Purgatory, every action that we plan or that we will has been proposed before, done, done already. Not to do again. When one fine day arrives when nothing at all is done you will be free. This is Purgatory. Not the afterlife, now. This planet just as it is, between hell and heaven poised. Come to the moment of doing and don’t do. That is the way.

13 September 2005
That things are buried in the earth
words in the sky till
we who need can find them

but so few are finders
the headache of desire
makes me blink at that bright spot

where something’s waiting
in the why of soil
I think only an eye that wants nothing

can see everything,
can spot the differences aloft
in cloudless sky

and draw them down to speak.

14 September 2005
On the Day One-Serpent

Where things are.
The butterfly
spread. Last night
we saw a little snake
first on our road
this whole summer
and then two dragonflies
in their mating
dance on the wing
flying together wildly
like a small bat
I thought at first
but you knew better,
snake-feeders they call them
a thousand miles away.

14 September 2005